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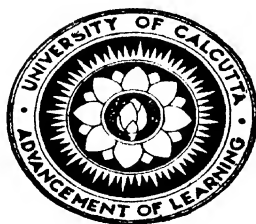
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ENGLISH PROSODY

BY

THE REV. C. S. MILFORD, M.A. (OXON.)

All students of Calcutta University are examined in English Prosody. But it must be confessed that there is a good deal of confusion and mystification about this subject, not only among the students but, not uncommonly, among the teachers and even the examiners also.

Partly this is due to the inevitable difficulty of dealing with the finer points of the *sounds* of any foreign language. But English Prosody has been a puzzle by no means only to foreign students; and members of this University who have found it bewildering might be reassured to know something of the amazing amount of confusion and difference on this subject among English scholars themselves even down to the present day.

To some extent this is almost inevitable. Rhythm is something which we can all perceive and enjoy—some, it is true, to a greater extent than others. But it is extremely difficult to reduce to rule or to expound in words. It is something which we learn in our cradles; ‘nursery rhymes,’ the child’s first literature, can get along very well without much sense, but never without a strongly marked rhythm. Yet just because its enjoyment is instinctive from such an early age, it is all the more difficult to analyse it, just as it is extremely difficult to analyse the movements of our own speech organs.

I still believe, however, that much of the confusion in English Prosody has been unnecessary, and that it is worth while trying to clear some of it away, though I am very doubtful how far it can ever be suitable as a formal branch of study for the Intermediate students of this University.

To begin with, many difficulties have arisen because all English scholars have been brought up on Greek and Latin poetry, and thus inherited a ready-made system of prosody, which they only gradually discovered to be unsuitable to their own language and which has saddled English Prosody with some misleading and unnecessary jargon up to the present day. Greek and Latin poetry was based on 'quantity' of syllables, which depended on the length of time taken in their pronunciation. There has been more or less agreement that this classical system is not fully applicable to English verse. Gascoigne, who lived in the sixteenth century and was the earliest English writer on Prosody, says that English verse is based on 'emphasis' rather than on length. Later writers have commonly used 'accent' or 'stress' instead of emphasis, but have generally agreed that this element, which is to some extent independent of length, is the chief basis of English verse. Coleridge gave great encouragement to this view by his preface to *Christabel*, in which he wrote, "The metre of *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle, namely that of counting, in each line, the accents, not the syllables." This has led some scholars to analyse English rhythm in terms of accents or stresses alone, ignoring the real importance of length, especially in the unstressed syllables. Others, like Saintsbury, have still regarded 'quantity' as the basis of English verse, though they do not maintain that this is to be strictly identified with length of time. An enormous amount of unnecessary ink has been spilt in controversy between the 'Foot and Quantity' school of Saintsbury, and those whom he calls with great contempt the 'accentualists' or 'stress-

men '—unnecessary because, as we shall see, both length and stress are equally essential to verse rhythm, if they are properly regarded.

Others, like Prof. Sonnenschein,¹ have tried to analyse by syllables only, ignoring to a great extent both stress and length. Further confusion has arisen because many critics have dimly perceived that 'pitch,' *i.e.*, the change of the musical tone of the voice, also has something to do with rhythm, but none has been able to see just what the connection is; *e.g.*, Sir G. Young writes,² "Of gamut or pitch in English verse there is nothing remaining. It is of course true that a pleasing combination of stressed and unstressed syllables which we call a 'rhythm,' or vowels and consonants in an order we find euphonious, in prose or verse may suggest a cadence or tune, and be pronounced accordingly. But cadence in verse is a metaphor and not a term of art." Others, such as Prof. W. Thomson, seem to think that raised pitch is simply a re-inforcement of stress and leave it at that.

Finally, many prosodists have agreed in refraining from any attempt to analyse or define what stress in English verse really is, and in particular its real relation to length has been largely ignored, though this is obviously a vital matter.

As an instance of the utter confusion into which some of the most learned and prolific writers have fallen, we may take this passage from Saintsbury's *Manual of English Prosody*, p. 21. Arguing that English verse is best analysed into feet consisting of 'long' and 'short' syllables, he admits that many syllables are 'common,' *i.e.*, they may be either short or long. He proceeds, "The methods and movements by which this commonness is turned into length or shortness for the purposes of the poet are obvious enough, and in practice undeniable Every well-educated and well-bred Englishman,

¹ E. A. Sonnenschein, *What is Rhythm?*

² Sir G. Young, *An English Prosody on Inductive Lines*. Cambridge, 1928.

who has been accustomed to read poetry and utter speech carefully, knows that when he emphasises a syllable like 'and,' 'it,' etc., it becomes capable of performing its metrical duty in the long position ; that when he does not, it is not so capable. Everyone knows in practice, though it may be denied in theory, that similar lengthening (in metrical quantity, not in vowel sound) follows the doubling of a consonant, after a short vowel, or the placing of a group of consonants of different kinds after it—the vowel sound running, as it were, under the penthouse of the consonants till it emerges. Extreme loudness or sharpness would have the same effect in conversation, but, unless very obviously suggested by the sense, would escape notice in silent reading." Among the more glaring blunders in this passage the following may be specially noted :—

(1) Saintsbury seems to realise that he is using long and short in a special sense, not with their literal meaning. He sometimes puts the words in inverted commas, and distinguishes between metrical quantity and length of vowel sound. But the use of these words is hopelessly misleading unless there is some ascertainable connection between their technical and ordinary senses. In point of fact, however, the kind of syllables he is considering may actually be much longer when they are unstressed than when they are stressed. In the line

Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us

the word 'of' is emphasised, *i.e.*, it is stressed, and Saintsbury would call it 'long.' A moment's reflection however will shew that in the line

The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece !

the word 'of,' though quite unstressed, is in actual time much longer than in the former line where it is stressed. Endless confusion has arisen from this misuse of terms.

(2) In Byron's line quoted above, the real length of the word 'of' is caused by the group of consonants, f, g, r, which follow the vowel. Saintsbury mentions this factor, but he

quite fails to detect that the length which it gives is true length, and has in many cases nothing to do with stress-‘length,’ or “performing a metrical duty in the long position.” His own last sentence quoted above contains no less than three words which completely belie what he said in the sentence before : ‘ extreme,’ ‘ effect ’ and ‘ suggest.’ Here vowels which are both really short and also unstressed, are followed in one case by a combination of different consonants, in the other two by doubled consonants. In the first case there is lengthening only in the true, not in the Saintsburian sense (*i.e.*, the first syllable is not stressed), and in the other two there is no lengthening in any sense. Saintsbury affected to despise phonetics, and like many others who do that, he seems to be hypnotised by spelling, which, specially in a language like English, has no necessary relation to the actual sound.

(3) Elsewhere Saintsbury has said that he does not know what ‘ length ’ is, but he can recognise it. Here he falls back on the “ well-educated and well-bred Englishman ” who knows instinctively where the stress should fall. This attitude has been another great cause of confusion ; scholars have not troubled to analyse what they and most of their pupils have known and done instinctively since childhood, and have, therefore, failed to detect what should have been obvious facts.

This last point is one of the considerations which have emboldened me to venture on this field where so much has already been written. In a letter to me a few years ago Prof. A. Lloyd James wrote, “ As for rhythm, all the men who have written on it have suffered from the disadvantage of never having had to teach English phonetics to foreigners.” It is through doing just this in Calcutta University during the last nine years that I have been led to study the rhythms and specially the stresses of my own language without taking so much for granted as has usually been done. Some hints given me by Prof. Lloyd James I have found specially fruitful and

suggestive for the analysis of English stress ; and I have not been able to find any writing which throws an equal amount of light on it.

I propose in this paper to attempt two tasks. First, the analysis of stress itself. (Admittedly this is a very difficult thing to do by means of the printed word. It is only fair to say that Prof. Lloyd James himself regards it as impossible ; he wrote, " Verbal descriptions of rhythm are useless, in speech as in music ; it is a subjective experience, like colour, and cannot be described without reference to itself." I believe, however, that this view is unnecessarily pessimistic.) Secondly, an easier task, to draw attention to a tradition in English Prosody represented chiefly by Coventry Patmore and Dr. D. S. McColl, which has been too little known, and never fully adopted in any of the formal treatises, but which, I believe, sheds much light, specially on the place of stress in English verse and its relation to length or time, and which, if it were more widely known and taught, would greatly simplify the whole subject.

ANALYSIS OF STRESS IN ENGLISH

Everyone is agreed that in all speech, prose no less than verse, some syllables are more prominent than others, and that this prominence and its recurrence play a vital part in rhythm. It has been variously named emphasis, stress or accent ; while some writers have used both stress and accent to indicate different kinds of prominence. I shall use the word stress only, for three reasons. Because it is the one most commonly used by modern writers on phonetics ; because accent is highly ambiguous and has been used in so many different senses ; and because I believe that the different kinds of stress, such as word-stress (the prominence of a syllable in the word), sentence-stress (the prominence of a word in the sentence), metrical stress, rhetorical stress, and so on, are all different aspects of one fundamental entity.

What is this stress? What is it that makes one syllable more prominent than another? A great many writers have assumed that it is *force*; the tone is louder, the breath is expelled from the lungs with greater vigour, or what not. This view will be found in many standard books on phonetics. It is adopted by so careful and weighty a writer as Prof. Thomson,¹ who says, "When we say that we accent or stress a syllable we mean that we apply greater force to it, we expend greater energy on its production, we utter it with a louder voice, as compared with other syllables." Others like Saintsbury, as we have seen, equate it with 'length,' but apparently do not trouble to enquire what, if any, is its relation to actual length. Others are more cautious, and refuse to define it at all. Thus Patmore, in an important passage to which we shall return later, wrote, "Some writers have identified our metrical accent with long quantity; others have placed it in relative loudness; others have fancied it to consist, like the Greek, in pure tone; others have regarded it as a compound of loudness and elevation of tone; and others, again, have regarded it as a general prominence acquired by one syllable over another, by any or all of these elements in combination. Now, it seems to me that the only tenable view of that accent upon which it is allowed, with more or less distinctness, by all, that English metre depends, in contradistinction to the syllabic metre of the ancients, is the view which attributes to it the function of marking, *by whatever means*, certain isochronous intervals." Similarly T. S. Omond writes, "Accent is the emphasis, however produced, which selects one or more syllables out of a group of syllables, one or more words out of a group of words." This is an admirable statement as far as it goes, and perhaps is sufficient for practical purposes for those who know instinctively how to stress their mother-tongue. But is it really necessary to leave the matter as indefinite as this?

¹ W. Thomson. *The Rhythm of Speech* 1923.

Attempts have been made to analyse stress by means of laboratory experiments. Accounts of some of these will be found in papers by Dr. E. W. Scripture in the *British Journal of Psychology* for 1921, p. 225, and *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1923. He used an apparatus which accurately recorded in the length of time occupied by each syllable, the loudness or amplitude of the sound, and the changes in musical tone or pitch. He concludes that four elements give stress to portions of speech; namely, increased length, increased loudness, raised pitch, and increased precision of enunciation.

There is some truth in this. But Dr. Scripture does not, in these papers at any rate, analyse his data far enough to bring out their full meaning. First, with regard to length. It is true that it often does play a part in stress, but the relation is a subtle one as we shall see, and it is quite misleading simply to say that length contributes to stress. In the word 'record,' whichever syllable is stressed, the second syllable remains immensely longer than the first, which is equally short in either case. Moreover, as will appear later, the lengthening which indicates stress may often be the lengthening not of the stressed syllable at all, but of another.

Coming next to loudness, Dr. Scripture's own recordings shew that this is a very doubtful criterion of stress. He gives diagrams of the motion of the recording arm of his apparatus for the words 'butter,' 'bushel,' 'butcher.' In all of these the first syllable is stressed, but in 'butter' each syllable was shewn to be equally loud; in 'bushel' the second was slightly louder, and in 'butcher' it was much louder. Possibly the affricative sound of *tch* is responsible for this last fact. The same result may be observed by holding a small piece of tissue paper before the mouth as one speaks. It will be easily noticed that stressed syllables do not in general produce any stronger emission of breath which can be observed from the movement of the paper; but the paper will fly up at plosive and affricative consonants, whether the syllables are stressed

or not. It would seem in fact that the association of force with stress is very largely only subjective, as far as ordinary speech and reading is concerned. The speaker seems to himself to pronounce these syllables with greater energy, but there is no corresponding increase in loudness or force which can be observed or recorded.

Dr. Scripture's third element, raised pitch, is certainly very often associated with stress in English, but here again I believe that the connection is a more subtle one than his plain statement suggests.

His fourth point is "increased precision of enunciation." He does not explain very clearly what he means by this, but if he includes in it the quality of the short vowel sounds, I believe he has hit upon one of the most important aspects of the question, and one which has been most widely ignored. But he does not seem to be very clear about it. He gives an analysis of part of the nursery rhyme, "Who killed Cock Robin?" Now, all would agree that the first syllable of 'Robin' is stressed. But Scripture is puzzled to explain this. He writes, "It is difficult to say why the first syllable of 'Robin' produced a strong impression. Although the amplitude is large, the pitch is low. Possibly the r should be taken as part of the vowel stretch. This would give a long length." Whatever the explanation, it is certainly not this; for if we substitute say b for r, and say 'Cock Bobbin,' the same syllable is just as obviously stressed as before, though the b cannot possibly be regarded as adding length to the vowel sound.

The discussion of this word leads conveniently to the statement of what I believe to be the most important single element in English stress at present.

ELEMENTS OF STRESS IN ENGLISH

(1) *Vowel Quality.*

In modern Southern English, of the short vowel sounds, the neutral vowel ə is always unstressed; i and u may be

either stressed or unstressed; the others, namely e, æ, ʌ, ɔ are always stressed.¹ At first sight it does not seem as if this could be a statement of any great importance with regard to stress in general; but actually it is far-reaching. The neutral vowel has now become so very frequent that a very large number of syllables are at once indicated as being unstressed, and this by contrast suggests stress on neighbouring syllables. Any syllable which if stressed would have the sounds æ, ʌ or ɔ, always has ə if unstressed.¹ Where the stressed sound would be e, the unstressed is either ə or i, the latter being specially common in prefixes and suffixes, as in 'extend,' 'remain,' 'houses,' 'parted.' The neutral vowel has also taken the place of long vowels and diphthongs in very many unstressed syllables, as in 'tremendous,' 'contrary,' 'photography,' 'parliament.'

This phenomenon is of course familiar enough and is pointed out in every text-book on phonetics specially in connection with the 'strong' and 'weak' forms of monosyllables; but it seems to have been strangely ignored in the treatment of stress. It may perhaps be argued that the degeneration of the vowel sounds is only a *result* of the heavy stress on other syllables; but it surely remains just as true

¹ There are a number of exceptions to this; but on the whole they are surprisingly few and can mostly be easily explained:—

(1) Æ, e and ʌ often retain their full pronunciation even when unstressed, if they are followed by a combination of consonants; e.g. campaign, ab'sent, 'contact, 'extract, conquest, insect, portent, conduct.

(2) When the short vowel has not degenerated, it should probably often be regarded as carrying a secondary stress. This is specially so in three cases:

(a) Compound words, e.g. hatstand, bedspread, come-back, tree-stump, dumbell.

(b) Proper names, specially foreign names in which the sounds are naturally emphasised in a special way; e.g. Penang, Gantok, Conrad.

(c) Long words, which regularly have a secondary stress, to avoid the difficulty of pronouncing many unstressed syllables together; e.g. contravention, aberration, parenthetical.

A few words remain, such as, inset, progress, process, which cannot be brought under any of the above heads, but I believe they are very few,

that it is now an essential *element* in the stressing of those syllables. For after all stress is simply a question of the relative prominence of syllables, and therefore the degeneration of one automatically gives prominence to its neighbours.

Certainly it is true that today the mere presence of one of the vowels *e*, *æ*, *ʌ*, *ɔ* is enough in itself to give the impression of stress without the help of any of the other means of giving prominence. This is the secret of the stress observed on the first syllable of 'Robin' in the line, "Who killed Cock Robin?" If the line be read on a monotone and with no variations of loudness, the same syllable will still be heard as stressed. Similarly in pairs of words such as *p*resent and *pr*ésent, *c*oncert and *con*cert, substance and subtract, barrack and canal, *c*onvict and *con*vict, the vowel sounds are enough in themselves to indicate clearly which syllable is stressed; though in most contexts it would also be shewn in some other way also, specially by intonation.

It will be noticed that in a certain number of words this element of vowel quality gives no indication of the stress. Such are words which have only the vowel sound *i*, vivid, insist, instinct, distinctive, indivisibility. Also the words noted in the footnote above where *e*, *æ* or *ʌ* still stand in unstressed syllables—*e.g.*, impact, conquest; and a few words like window, harpoon, containing an unstressed syllable with a long vowel or diphthong which has not yet degenerated. In words of this kind (which are on the whole surprisingly few) we are chiefly dependent on intonation for fixing the stress.

(2) *Intonation or Pitch.*

In the production of any 'voiced' sounds, which includes all vowels unless they are whispered, the vocal chords of the larynx vibrate. These vibrations must have a definite frequency and can therefore be assigned to a definite tone in the musical scale. In ordinary speech, as opposed to singing, the changes of tone or pitch are so many and swift, and the tone itself

is often so low and indistinct, that the intonation is very difficult to record or indicate in notation. Many writers have felt that intonation (*i.e.*, the changes in tone or pitch) have something to do with rhythm; but they have often dismissed it as being important only for rhetorical expression and not for the regular rhythm of prosody; or have been content to say that high tone is part of stress and to leave it at that.

Actually in English high tone is usually associated with stress. But this is not universally true in English and even less so in many other languages. In Welsh for instance and also in Bengali, stress is often indicated by a lowering of the tone. In English the general rules seem to be as follows:

(a) Stress on any syllable of a word other than the last is shewn by a plain change of tone whether up or down, *i.e.*, the stressed syllable is spoken on a higher or lower tone than the rest of the word. Usually it is higher, but in certain cases, *e.g.*, in questions expecting the answer 'yes' or 'no,' or in counting objects (until the last one is reached), the intonation is inverted, and the stress is indicated by a drop. In "Do you do it by instinct?" the stress on the first syllable of 'instinct' would be indicated by speaking it on a lower tone than the adjacent syllables. Similarly in counting "fifty, sixty, seventy."

(b) If the stress is on the last syllable, this starts on a higher tone than the previous syllables and drops *during* the pronunciation of the vowel. Here also the intonation is inverted in the special cases mentioned above.

One interesting point about intonation is specially significant for verse rhythm. It is this. The above rules of intonation are always true of words spoken in isolation, and generally true in connected speech. But in certain contexts the intonation may be "flattened out," particularly when a word of which one syllable would normally be stressed, stands in a subordinate position in a sentence. In the sentence "Not

this village, but that village," village, specially the second time, would be spoken with a perfectly flat or even intonation. Now, when this happens to a word of this particular kind, in which, as we have seen, the vowel sounds (i in each syllable) give no indication of the stress, it would seem that there is no objective expression left at all of the stress on the first syllable. It cannot certainly be indicated by length, for in actual time the second syllable of 'village' is certainly longer than the first. Yet when this set of circumstances occurs in poetry, as it not uncommonly does (especially since rapid changes of intonation tend to occur less in poetry than in prose), all prosodists agree without hesitation in marking a stress on the syllable that would normally carry it, if the word stood in isolation.

E.g., Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands.

Or, A spirit haunts the year's last hours.

All would agree in stressing the first syllables of 'village,' 'smithy' and 'spirit.' Yet in each case each syllable has the same short i sound; and though 'smithy' certainly has falling intonation, most readers would, I believe, speak the other two words with, to all intents and purposes, level intonation. It seems certain that in these cases both the speaker and the hearer mentally carry over the association of the stress which is normally given to these syllables by intonation; and therefore they *feel* and seem to *hear* the stress, though in fact it has not objective indication at all. This small point has been somewhat laboured because it is significant as illustrating the mental or subjective element in stress, which, as will be seen, is specially important for the understanding of verse rhythm.

(3) *Length.*

As has been remarked above, length has sometimes been identified with stress; or has been said to be one of the elements

which contributes to the impression of stress. The latter statement has some truth in it, but the relationship between length and stress is not so simple as this, and an unstressed syllable will often be much longer than an adjacent stressed one.

In order to explain the relation, it is necessary to anticipate somewhat by stating the fundamental basis of verse rhythm. It is this. The lines are divided into approximately equal isochronous sections by the recurring stress; *i.e.*, each group of syllables starting with a stress is spoken in approximately the same length of time. As one would expect, the regularity of beat is most noticeable in the simplest poetry, and specially in traditional poetry such as nursery rhymes. The principle is illustrated very clearly by such a line as this—

This is the house that Jack built.

Here there are four ‘stress groups’ or ‘feet’ each beginning with a stress, and consisting of 3, 2, 1 and 1 syllables; and each occupies exactly the same time in pronunciation.

We can now state some of the ‘rules’ governing the relation between stress and length. (It need hardly be mentioned that ‘rule’ is used throughout in a purely inductive sense; the rules are merely generalisations based on observation of what has been in fact the general practice of writers, readers and singers of English verse.)

‘*Long Vowels*’¹ tend to be lengthened if they occur in stressed syllables, (*a*) especially if there is a shortage of sounds to fill up the interval between one stress and the next, as in ‘monosyllabic feet.’ *E.g.*, in

Break, break, break,
On thy cold grey stones, O sea!

the diphthongs in the first line are lengthened to help each word to fill a time equal to that taken by the pairs of words ‘cold grey’ and ‘stones O’ in the second line.

¹ *i.e.*, *i* : *e* : *a* : *o* : *u* : and diphthongs.

(b) If the same vowel sound is stressed, but there are other sounds in the same foot, it will generally be somewhat shorter.

(c) It will tend to be shorter still if it is unstressed, though it is still classified as a 'long' vowel. This is true of the vowel in 'grey' in the second line above, which is unstressed.

'*Short Vowels*' cannot themselves be lengthened at all; but in case (a) above, the syllable can still be lengthened to fill up the foot, only in this case the length will attach to the following consonant or consonants, possibly helped also by a 'rest'¹ or interval of silence. It is specially to be noted that even a 'stop' or 'plosive' consonant can be thus lengthened, though they are usually thought of as having practically no length. In "This is the house that Jack built," there is a very marked lengthening of the consonant k at the end of Jack, consisting of an interval between the closing of the consonant and the opening or 'plosion' which occurs only just before the first consonant of the next word. In 'built' the same lengthening shared between the two consonants l and t.

Notice also that this lengthening of consonants after a short vowel takes place only in the last syllable of a foot (or of course the only syllable if the foot is monosyllabic) or when the stressed vowel is followed by a heavy combination of consonants, as in such words as 'flaxen,' 'pensive.' In other cases, the length is carried over, so to speak, to a later syllable. Here again, if the vowel of the next syllable is short, the length goes to the consonant or consonants following that, as in Longfellow's 'spreading' and 'village' quoted before. If, however, the next vowel is long, this vowel itself is lengthened, as in such a word as 'gallows,' where we have the apparent

¹ The distinction between *rest* and *pause* as used in music should be carefully noticed. A *rest* is a period of silence needed to fill up the interval between beats or stresses which follow one another at regular intervals. A *pause* is extra-metrical; it is a stoppage of the regular recurrence of stresses, and the extra time so inserted may be filled either with a sustained sound or with silence.

anomaly of a short vowel in the stressed syllable followed by a long vowel in the unstressed.

The above remarks will have made it clear that even when there is lengthening, it is very often not on the stressed syllable; and in many cases of course there is no reason for any lengthening at all, when the sound sufficiently fill up the interval between the stresses, *e.g.*, in the first foot of "This is the house that Jack built."

In the case of the long vowels, other factors enter into their length too. Quite apart from verse rhythm, these 'long vowels' have three different lengths each. (a) They are shortest if followed immediately by another vowel or with only a semi-vowel between. (b) They are slightly longer if followed by an unvoiced consonant. (c) They are longer still if followed by a voiced consonant. Thus in Gray's line

The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea
in the word 'lowing' (which according to the method of scansion adopted in this article should be regarded as forming a foot by itself) the first syllable, which is stressed, contains a diphthong. But because it is followed by only a semi-vowel it is so short that the second unstressed syllable with its short vowel is actually longer than the first, the length going chiefly to the consonant *ng* at the end. In the nursery rhyme so often quoted already, if we substitute 'Jones' for 'Jack,' "This is the house that Jones built," then the diphthong of Jones, followed by the voiced *n*, will be lengthened so as to occupy most of the foot. If, however, we substitute 'Pope,' though the vowel is the same, it is followed by the unvoiced *p* and will therefore be much shorter, and will leave quite a lot of length for the final *p*, which will therefore be actually longer than the much heavier *nz* sound at the end of 'Jones'; though not quite so long as the *k* of 'Jack,' where the vowel could not be lengthened at all. Much light can be thrown on this whole question of length and stress by the simple experiment of substituting different words for 'Jack,' such as 'Robin,'

'Robinson' and so on. (This point was suggested by Prof. Lloyd James.)

Two other things may be noted in this connection, though both anticipate to some extent the next section.

(a) There are combinations of sounds which cannot possibly be pronounced quickly, even though they may be in an unstressed syllable and there may be enough other sounds to fill up the normal length of the foot. A striking instance is in Gray's *Elegy*, the line quoted above,

The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea.

Here all prosodists would agree that 'winds' is metrically unstressed. But not only is its vowel sound very long, being a diphthong followed by a voiced consonant, but also this is followed again by a very heavy group of consonants, ndzsl. Moreover the stressed syllables before and after it are also long. In such a case as this it is impossible that the stresses should follow each other in strictly regular time. The intervals between 'herd' and 'slow' and between 'o'er' and 'lea' cannot possibly be equal. This means that there is what musicians call *ritenuto*, namely the slowing up of the stresses or beats themselves, the fundamental rhythm of the line. This has much the same effect as a pause properly so called. Needless to say the great poets were well aware of this, and have used this device to convey emotional effects, as in this particular line.

(b) Length often has a decisive effect in fixing the position of the stress when it is doubtful, in particular when there is a succession of monosyllables, all of which would be stressed in prose, but which cannot all carry a verse stress. We adjust the length of the syllables in order, so to say, to bring the syllable we wish to stress under the recurring hammer-blow of the rhythmic stress in our mind. In Shelley's *Hymn of Pan* we find in the first stanza these lines :

From the river-girt islands,
Where loud waves are dumb.

As far as these two lines themselves are concerned, they could be read as dimeter, with two stresses only (on the first syllables of 'river' and 'island,' and on 'loud' and 'dumb') in the same way as Arnold's lines in *The Forsaken Merman*,

She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door. etc.

When however we look at the other two stanzas of the poem, we find that the lines corresponding to "Where loud waves are dumb" are

The light of the dying day,
and And Love, and Death, and Birth;

each of which must obviously have three stresses. The printing of the stanzas shews that they are clearly identical in form, so that "Where loud waves are dumb" must also be trimeter. Here, to indicate the three stresses we lengthen 'loud,' specially its vowel sound, so that it is capable of filling a whole foot, which automatically brings the next stress on to 'waves.' 'Waves' is also lengthened, but not so much, because the next syllable 'are' fills up part of the foot. If the line is scanned with two feet only, both 'loud' and 'waves' are much shorter—the three syllables of the foot 'loud waves are' being all of approximately the same length.

In cases such as this, if the syllable to be stressed has a short vowel, the extra length will usually be on adjacent syllables and not on the stressed syllable itself. A good instance is Gay's line

How 'happy could 'I be with 'either,

which can be scanned either with three stresses as marked above, or with four, stressing 'could' and 'be' instead of 'I.' In the former case no syllable is lengthened, the diphthongs of 'I' and 'either' being comparatively short, though both are stressed. In the latter case, the *second* syllable of 'happy' is drawn out and followed by a short 'rest,' so that the word can fill a whole foot; the next stress, therefore, falls on 'could,'

The vowel of this word cannot be lengthened ; so the added length needed to shew that ' could I ' fills a whole foot is transferred to ' I.' This in turn brings ' be ' under the next stress. This line is specially instructive, for the syllable ' I ' is actually longer in the second scansion, where it is unstressed, than in the first, where it is stressed : whereas in the case of ' be ' the added length and added stress both coincide in the tetrameter scansion.

The above brief analysis will serve to shew that the relation between stress and length is a subtle but at the same time an important one.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH PROSODY

We may now proceed to the statement of some general principles which may enlighten the study of English Prosody. In this part I do not claim much originality ; but though the ideas which I shall try to expound have been well stated before, they are not easily accessible in text-books. They were first clearly set out by Coventry Patmore, in an essay on *English Metrical Law* which appeared originally in Vol. XXVII of the *North British Review*, in 1857, and was reprinted as a preface to his volume of poems, *Amelia*, published in 1878. This book has long been out of print, and the importance of the essay was not recognised, and it was not reprinted in his collected papers ; it is now, therefore, difficult to come by. Patmore himself acknowledges his debt to the work of Joshua Steele published in 1775. The same views will be found worked out in greater detail and with a good deal of criticism of other theories, in several essays by Dr. D. S. McColl. (*Rhythm in English Verse, Prose and Speech*, in " Essays and Studies by members of the English Association " 1914. An article on *Metre* in his book of collected essays entitled *Confessions of a Keeper*. And, more easily obtainable, an article *Sense and Nonsense in English Prosody* in the *London Mercury*, Vol. 38, 1938.)

The views stated in the above papers seem to me open to only minor criticisms, chiefly in the light of the analysis of stress attempted above. *E.g.*, Patmore on p. 20 of his essay says, "With us, the places of the *metrical* accent 'or 'ictus,'¹ of the accent in the sense of change of tone, and of long quantity, coincide." We have already seen that such a sweeping statement is somewhat wide of the mark. He is also too ready, as in the passage already quoted above (p. 7), to assume that stress or *ictus* is indefinable; and he even says (p. 26), "I think it demonstrable that, for the most part, it has not material and external existence at all, but has its place in the mind, which craves measure in everything, and wherever the idea of measure is uncontradicted, delights in marking it with an imaginary 'beat'." If rhythm were really as subjective as this, there would be even far less agreement about English scansion than there is at present! Similarly, Dr. McColl, in the first of the papers mentioned above, writes, "The colour or quality of vowels is not necessary in verse," whereas I have tried to shew above that it is an essential element of stress whether in verse or in prose.

Apart from this, I believe that their views are in the main sound, and they have been adopted to a greater or lesser extent by various other writers—a list is given by Dr. McColl in his *London Mercury* article. One of the best text-books is T. S. Omond, *A Study of Metre*; some criticisms of this are suggested below just because it seems on the whole to be on the right lines. No attempt will be made to criticise in detail the mass of other theories that have been put forward—a thankless and endless task.

We may take as a starting point a passage from Patmore's essay which follows immediately that already quoted on p. 7. "Now it seems to me that the only tenable view of that accent

¹ *Ictus* is Latin and means a blow. It is used to indicate the recurring stress or 'beat' in music, which can be indicated by 'beating time,' by tapping, by marching or dancing.

upon which it is allowed, with more or less distinctness, by all, that English metre depends, in contradistinction to the syllabic metres of the ancients, is the view which attributes to it the function of marking, by whatever means, certain isochronous intervals. Metre implies something measured; an assertion which sounds like a truism; but to a person who has studied our metrical critics, it will probably seem a starting novelty. It is one, however, which can afford to stand without any further recommendation than its obvious merits, for the present. The thing measured is the time occupied in the delivery of a series of words. But time measured implies something that measures, *and is therefore itself unmeasured*: an argument before which those who hold that English accent and long quantity are identical must bow. These are two indispensable conditions of metre—first, that the sequence of vocal utterance, represented by written verse, shall be divided into equal or proportionate spaces; secondly, *that the fact of that division, shall be made manifest* by an ‘ictus’ or ‘beat,’ actual or mental, which, like a post in a chain railing, shall mark the end of one space, and the commencement of another.”

It will be noticed that this statement gives their proper place to both length and stress, as being both equally indispensable to verse rhythm, and thus disposes at one blow of all the controversy which has taken place between the “length” school and the “stress” school. It has already been remarked above that Patmore is inclined to emphasise too much the mental nature of the stress or ictus. It is true that instances have been quoted above, like “The village smithy stands,” where for special reasons two stresses in a trimeter line are entirely mental, though even here there is an association with an objective phenomenon (change of tone) which would appear in the pronunciation of the same words in ordinary prose or conversation. There are also very many cases, as we shall see, where one or more stresses are entirely lacking from a line; this is specially common in Blank Verse, notably in

Milton's. In such cases it is certainly true that a purely mental ictus has to be supplied by the reader or listener; it is even essential to a good and sensitive rendering of the lines that there should *not* be any objective indication of the stress; for this would fall on an unimportant syllable and would at once give the impression of 'doggerel.' But it is of the utmost importance to remember that such lines are and always must be in a minority, even in the freest and most varied verse. The majority of lines do contain a regular number of stresses which are objectively indicated by the ordinary pronunciation of the words in their everyday use in speech. (The earlier part of this article has attempted to analyse how this is done.) This recurrence of actual stresses sets the 'time-beater' or 'metronome' going in the reader's head; so that when he comes to a line where an actual stress is deficient, he immediately supplies it mentally. (See p. 34 for a fuller analysis of this.)

Similarly, if he meets a line where there are an excessive number of syllables which in ordinary speech would be stressed, the mental time-beater selects the proper number for the purpose of the verse-rhythm, as in Milton's famous line

Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens and shades of death.

In this case there is also an increase of the time interval between the stresses, and therefore the slowing of the whole time of the music, the *ritenuto* referred to above. But the reader is only able to supply the mental stresses with certainty because in a number of adjacent lines the regular number of stresses and no more are actually present. Many lines in Milton could hardly be recognised as blank verse if they stood in complete isolation; and it very often happens, as in Shelley's poem quoted above, that there may be genuine and legitimate doubt about the scansion of certain lines, which can only be settled by comparing them with other corresponding lines or with the general structure of the poem.

Some critics have fallen foul of the statement that the intervals measured by the stresses are isochronous. It may be true that the times are exactly equal only in nursery rhymes and other simple and more or less primitive types of verse. But I believe that in any verse which is regular enough to be submitted to any sort of formal scansion there is a very fair regularity in the length of the feet if the reader or reciter knows his business and has a good sense of rhythm. It is of course only too easy to recite Shakespeare in such a way that it might just as well be prose.

Patmore rightly emphasises the close analogies between poetry and music, and these have been further developed by other writers such as Dr. McColl. Saintsbury poured scorn on this idea, but did not really bring any arguments to meet it. He wrote that "the laws of singing are not the laws of saying," and left it at that. It is indeed true that no close analogy can be found between the intonation of poetry and the melody of music; and also that when poetry is set to music and sung the natural verse rhythm is practically always distorted to some extent. But all this is beside the point, which is that in every language poetry has from the earliest times been associated with the rhythms of singing and dancing, with their regularly recurring stress, beat or *ictus*.

One important practical consideration emerges from this analogy. In European musical notation, the rhythmical unit, or "bar" (corresponding roughly to the *foot* of poetry) is always regarded as beginning with a 'strong beat' or stress.¹ There may also be a subsidiary stress half way through the bar if it contains an even number of time-units (corresponding to syllables in poetry), but in this case the bar can really be resolved into two, each beginning with a stress. Other notes in the bar may be and often are specially emphasised, but in

¹ In music the word 'beat' is used of the unit of time, corresponding to the syllable in verse, of which there may be 2, 3, 4 or more in each bar. But it is the first or stressed beat of the bar which is really analogous to the *ictus* of verse. Here, as in the case of 'accent,' the terminology is confusing.

this case there is always felt to be a conflict between the regularly recurring stress at the beginning of each bar, and the special emphasis; this conflict is called 'syncopation.' Now this method of notation is not accidental, but records the fact that, if time is divided into regular intervals, we can only measure the intervals from one point of division to the next. As Dr. McColl points out, one cannot measure the intervals between the strokes of a bell except from the strokes themselves; or, to take Patmore's figure, we should measure lengths of railing from post to post, not from some point intermediate between the posts. This point is dealt with in detail by Prof. Thomson and also by the French writer Verrier.¹

The practical importance of this is that if we scan poetry on the musical analogy, as Patmore and Dr. McColl do, the divisions, whether we call them bars, feet or measures, will always begin with a stressed syllable, thus rendering obsolete the classical analysis into iambus, anapest, etc. It is true of course that what has usually been called 'iambic rhythm' is something real and objective, but this is clearly indicated in the 'musical' notation by the presence at the beginning of the line of an 'up-beat' or 'anacrusis' before the start of the first foot.²

It may be objected that this is really a distinction without a difference; and indeed from the practical point of view, provided the stresses are correctly marked, it often matters very little how the syllables are grouped into feet. But this method, of always beginning the foot with a stress, has three

¹ P. Verrier, *Essai sur les Principes de la Metrique Anglaise*, 1909.

These scholars argue that the vowel sound is the most prominent part of a syllable; they therefore reckon the stress from the beginning of the vowel of the stressed syllable attaching any preceding consonants to the previous syllable. This requires very awkward notation and such accuracy is not needed for ordinary purposes.

² In 'beating time' the stress is always indicated by a downward movement of the hand. An 'iambic' line will therefore start with an upward movement, indicating the preliminary unstressed syllable. Cf. the use of the Greek word 'thesis' to indicate the stress - originally derived from the downward movement of the foot in dancing or marching.

advantages : (1) As we have seen, it corresponds to the actual facts of measurement. (2) It simplifies the scansion, and should encourage the elimination of the classical terms which now do little but darken counsel in English prosody. (3) In many cases it greatly helps in indicating the true division of time on which the rhythm depends. Take this line of Shelley :

The 'one | re'mains, | the 'ma | ny 'change | and 'pass.

If it is scanned in the conventional way as above, this quite fails to represent the rhythm, since the foot 'the ma—' is obviously much shorter in actual duration than the others. Some prosodists would write | the 'many | 'change; this has the advantage of suggesting the rest after 'many' which is essential to the metre, but it brings the stress into the middle of the foot and so deprives it of its function as indicating the divisions of time. On the other hand

The | 'one re | 'mains, the | 'many | 'change and | 'pass

accurately indicates the rhythm, since the stresses do actually follow each other at regular intervals. Some indication of the slight rest after 'many' (needed to fill up the time of the foot since the second syllable with its short vowel cannot be lengthened to any appreciable extent) may be added if greater accuracy is desired.

Some instances will be given later of scansion according to this method. It may be added that it simplifies matters by eliminating the need for assuming 'inversion,' 'resolution' and other devices which have been supposed in order to explain 'irregularities' more particularly in blank verse.

Another advantage of the 'musical' or 'bar' method of scansion is that it helps in the recognition of *rests*, which is vital for the proper understanding of English verse. Here also Patmore was an important pioneer, though he acknowledged his own debt to Joshua Steele.¹

¹ Patmore himself uses the word 'pause' throughout; but as explained above.

This section of my argument would be best explained by making use of ordinary European musical notation. I shall try however to make it clear without using this. In the musical setting of any hymn in 'Common Metre' (*i.e.*, what the prosodists would call alternate lines of iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter) it will be found that the lines are arranged as follows :—

O | God our | help in | a- ges | past
 Our | hope for | years to | come,— | —
 Be | thou our | guard while | troubles | last
 And | our e- | ternal | home.— | —

Here, the longer vertical lines represent the divisions between bars, each consisting of four 'beats' or notes; the shorter lines shew the secondary stresses dividing each bar into two. (As was remarked above, for the purpose of scansion each bar can virtually be regarded as two separate feet) It will be seen that counting the dashes at the end of the second and fourth lines the whole stanza contains exactly eight bars or sixteen feet, the unstressed "up-beat" at the beginning of each line completing the last bar of the previous line, and that at the beginning of the stanza corresponding to the missing syllable at the end. In the musical rendering the time periods represented by the dashes at the ends of the second and fourth lines would probably be occupied by continuing the sound of the last word of the line through three-quarters of a bar; but the rhythmical effect would be precisely the same if part or all of this period were filled by a rest, which would probably be the case if the lines were said instead of being sung.

The same principle can be seen even more strikingly in "Short Metre" (*i.e.*, iambic trimeter with tetrameter in the third line) :

p. 15 note, *rest* is the correct term. It is extraordinary how many writers have ignored this distinction, familiar to all musicians.

A | man that | looks on | glass— | —
 On | it may | stay his | eye :— | —
 Or | if he | pleaseth, | through it | pass,
 • And | then the | heaven es- | py— | — .

Similarly, in stanzas consisting of four “ iambic trimeter ” lines only, the lengthened note or rest occurs at the end of *every* line, and the stanza still contains the same eight bars or sixteen feet as in the two previous cases. Finally, a stanza, consisting of four “ tetrameter ” lines containing eight syllables each, will be fitted into exactly the same musical scheme of eight bars, only in this case there will be no lengthened notes or rests at the end of any line.

This and other similar considerations led Patmore to lay down the principle that the real unit of English verse is a double foot corresponding to the full bar of the musical setting ; and that every line really consists of two or more of these double feet, which are completed where necessary by rests. “ Nothing but the unaccountable disregard, by prosodians, of final pauses¹ could have prevented the observation, of the great general law, which I believe that I am now, for the first time, stating, that the elementary measure, or integer, of English verse is double the measure of ordinary prose—that is to say, it is the space which is bounded by alternate accents, that every verse proper contains two, three, or four of these “ meters,” or, as with a little allowance they may be called, “ dipodes.” (*Op. cit.*, p. 44.)

It may be that this rule is not of universal application, but I believe that it is very widely true ; and that generally speaking every line of blank verse contains at its end a rest equivalent to the length of one foot, thus making up the three meters or bars of Patmore’s reckoning ; though of course part of the normal rest is often occupied by the extra syllable of the “ feminine ending.” Here are a few lines from *Paradise Lost* scanned on these principles :

¹ As previously explained, “ rest ” would be more correct here.

Had | 'cast him | 'out from | 'Heaven, with | 'all his | 'host— | '—
Of | 'rebel | 'Angels, | by whose | 'aid, as | 'piring | '—
To | 'set him | 'self in | 'glory a | 'bove his | 'peers,— | '—
He | 'trusted | to have | 'equalled | the Most | 'High.— | '— .

(The difficult question of the proper treatment of lines with less than the proper number of stresses will be discussed later.) It may not be possible to apply this rule rigidly in every case often when the sense runs on without a break from one line to the next, a rest equivalent to a whole foot would seem excessive. But generally speaking I believe that this principle will be found a useful guide in reading and recitation to decide the interval required to mark the break between one line and the next. Patmore rightly points out that either rhyme or alliteration may serve the practical purpose of indicating the divisions between the lines; and where both these are lacking the "rest" is absolutely essential.

The musical analogy is also very helpful in the proper recognition of internal rests. These lines,

I | 'vow to | 'thee, my | 'country | '—all | 'earthly | 'things
a | 'bove,— | '—
En | 'tire and | 'whole and | 'perfect, | '—the | 'service | of
my | 'love.— | '—

make utter metrical nonsense unless the “stressed rest” as we may perhaps call it, in the middle of each line, is recognised. The same metrical effect could perhaps be more clearly indicated by printing each line as two, as follows :

I vow to thee my country,
All earthly things above.

The true nature of the metre is very clearly shewn in this particular poem by some of the later lines in which every foot is filled by syllables : *e.g.*,

Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering.

The same thing is true of Tennyson's poem *The Valley of Caunteritz*, which has puzzled some prosodists, beginning :

'All a | 'long the | 'valley, | '— | 'stream that | 'flashes |
'white.— | '— |

In this case again some of the later lines fill the rests with syllables

There is no objection to retaining the term "foot," provided that it is understood to mean the stress group as a verse unit, corresponding to the bar in music but always with one stress only, and that at the beginning ; and that its associations with classical terminology are forgotten.

As we have seen, a foot may contain no syllables at all—it may consist entirely of rests. It may contain one syllable only—and this may be either a stressed syllable, as at the end of a blank verse line, or an unstressed syllable as at the beginning of a line of blank verse, or the beginning of the second half of the line quoted above, “all earthly things above.” Usually of course the foot has two syllables, a stressed followed by an unstressed. Note that in all these cases there is no difference whatever in the *rhythm* of the foot; rhythmically, the rests simply take the place of syllables. Again, the stressed syllable may be followed by two unstressed, giving “dactylic” or “anapestic” rhythm. Such trisyllabic feet are of course freely mixed with the disyllabic in most verse; when they occur in considerable numbers, they impart a special quality to the lines, but it is difficult in many cases to lay down any hard and fast division between the two types of rhythm. The question of the relative lengths of time occupied by the different syllables of the foot is a rather difficult one on which something will be said later.

Are there ever more than three syllables in a verse foot? In the stress-groups of prose, which as Patmore and others have pointed out, are the raw material of speech which is refined and regularised into the foot of verse, there are often more

than three. Here is a sentence of De Quincey with the stress groups marked off. "And the | grandeur of | these | two | terminal | objects is har | moniously sup | ported by the ro | mantic | circumstances of the | flight." In this short sentence we have one group of four syllables, two of five, and one of six. This is possible in prose because although some critics have claimed to find some rough 'isochronism' between these stress-groups, it is certainly only very approximate, and it is permissible to leave longer gaps between the stresses where a large number of syllables intervene. Even for prose however, the last group in this sentence is something of a "mouthful" and would be an exacting test for reading aloud; because it is felt that even in prose too many unstressed syllables in succession make something of a jumble. In verse where the isochronism is more strict, it would obviously be difficult to fit as many as four syllables into the time normally occupied by only two, and feet of more than three syllables are therefore very rare, if they exist at all. In this line from *Paradise Lost*,

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,"

the second foot apparently has four syllables; but there is evidence that Milton habitually treated 'spirit' as a single syllable, like the alternative form 'sprite.' And in any case all the four syllables here are exceptionally short. A few cases could also be quoted where a two syllable foot at the end of a line is followed without a rest by a two-syllable anacrusis at the beginning of the next, as in these lines from *The Groves of Blarney*:

Planted in order
In the rocky nooks.

There is a tendency among some modern poets to use what appear to be four-syllable feet, in a virile and bustling kind of verse, such as Masfield's *Cargoes*:

'Dirty British | 'coaster with a | 'salt-caked | 'Smoke stack
'Butting through the | 'channel in the | 'mad March | 'days,

Kipling has done the same kind of thing.

These feet easily divide into two, and the lines might reasonably be scanned as eight feet, though this would make them very heavy. If we regard the feet as having four syllables, their pronunciation is made easier by the fact that in many of them the third syllable is one which might carry a stress, and tends to subdivide the foot. The same tendency is seen carried a stage further in Vachell Lindsay's *The Congo* :

Fat blackbucks in a wine-barrel room,
 Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
 Sagged and reeled and | pounded on the | table,
 'Pounded | 'on the | 'table. | '——
 | 'Beat an empty | 'barrel with the | 'handle of a | broom,
 Hard as they were able.

The four-syllable feet marked off here contain no subsidiary stress, while the short lines interspersed suggest that the long lines should not be scanned with more than four feet. The analogy of the long lines here has the effect of ensuring that the short lines are pronounced slowly and heavily.

One further question arises which is of importance in the discussion of rhythm ; it is the relative lengths of time occupied by the syllables, or syllables and rests, within the foot. This is a difficult question and one which is hard to treat with any scientific accuracy because so much depends on the taste of the individual reader. But something must be said about it if only because such misleading statements have been made even by otherwise trustworthy authorities.

The rhythm of western music can mostly be broadly divided into two types, according to whether the main division of the " bar " is into two or four " beats " on the one hand, or three on the other. These two types are commonly referred to by prosodists as duple and triple measure respectively. (It may be mentioned here that according to Greek and Latin prosodists the spondee, dactyl and anapest were all duple

measures; in the two latter the two short syllables were regarded as occupying the same length of time as the long one. The trochee and iambus on the other hand were triple, since the long syllable was twice the length of the short.)

Many English metres can be recognised without any controversy as triple, *e.g.*, the dactyls of Browning's *Cavalier Songs* :

'Kentish Sir | 'Byng—— | stood for his | 'king,——
'Bidding the | 'crop-headed | 'parliament | 'swing.——

Obviously these lines have no resemblance to the classical dactyl, for the initial stressed syllables of the feet cannot with any consistency be made twice as long as each of the succeeding unstressed. As we have seen in the analysis of stress above, stressed syllables in English may be very short, and this is conspicuously so in these two lines in the case of "bid" and "crop." Everyone would probably agree that we have here a triple metre in which each syllable of the foot is approximately equal in length to the others. There can be no rigid equality : in some feet, such as "parliament," the ratio would be $1\frac{1}{2} : \frac{1}{2} : 1$ rather than $1 : 1 : 1$:—this is a variant of triple time which is very common in music, and would seem to fit a great many "dactylic" feet in English. But in any case the rhythm is still clearly triple and not duple. The monosyllabic feet are of course no exception to this : but in these feet the single syllable may be extended to occupy the whole time-interval, or a short rest may be left at the end of the foot. This is a matter of taste and makes no difference whatever to the rhythm.

Generally speaking, English metres with disyllabic feet seem also to be usually in triple time. If we take any normal "iambic" or "trochaic" line, *e.g.*,

Had cast him out of heaven with all his host.
O enter then His gates with praise.
The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece !

It seems quite clear that the stressed syllables are normally longer than the unstressed, and that a ratio of 2 : 1 fairly represents the relative length of the syllables. Of course it is not true that the stressed syllable is always the longer; we have seen above that in many cases the stressed syllable is very short. In these cases the other syllable is proportionately lengthened to fill the time-interval, so that the time ratio is reversed and becomes 1 : 2. This is illustrated by two feet in the line,

The | 'village | 'smithy | stands.

But it is still true that the time is triple, one syllable being approximately twice as long as the other.

The same thing is true of the trisyllabic feet which are very frequent in blank verse and other generally disyllabic metres, specially at the beginning of a line : *e.g.*,

'Aw'd when he | hears his Godlike Romans rage,

(These lines have commonly been explained by supposing "inversion," *i.e.*, the substitution of a trochee for an iambus in the first foot. This explanation is meaningless if we start from the principle stated above, that the stress must fall at the beginning of each time-division; though these lines do of course get a special character from the fact that there is no preliminary unstressed syllable or anacrusis.) Here, as in other "dactylic" feet, the ratio $1\frac{1}{2} : \frac{1}{2} : 1$ would seem usually to represent fairly the rhythm—again it is triple time.

Is there any such thing as "duple time" or "duple measure" in English verse?

(1) It is found as a regular metre in such poems as those quoted by Masfield and Vachell Lindsay. This kind of metre is not at all common.

(2) Duple feet are found in blank verse and other triple metres in two special cases, which occur very commonly. (a) When there is an excessive number of syllables which in prose

would be stressed, as in the line of Milton already quoted above :

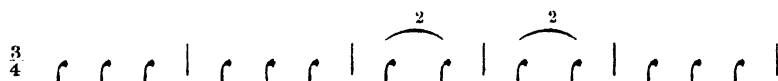
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens and shades of death.

Here in the first two feet the metrically unstressed syllables are equal in length to the stressed. We have therefore here feet in duple time with a marked slowing of the speed, or "ritenuto." (b) I believe the same is true of those lines where there are less than the proper number of stresses : *e.g.*,

Of | 'rebel | 'Angels | by whose | 'aid as | 'piring
 'Under the | 'reign of | 'Chaos | and old | 'Night.

In the feet "by whose" and "and old" a good reader would make the two syllables approximately equal in length, thus helping to give the impression that neither is stressed. As neither is very short, the normal time interval is comfortably filled.

(In Western music this interspersion of duple time among triple bars is often found. The following notation



indicates that in the bars with a bracket and "2" over them the two notes occupy exactly the same total time as the three notes in the other bars. In the lines quoted above therefore the ratio in the normal feet would be 2 : 1, and in those without stresses $1\frac{1}{2} : 1\frac{1}{2}$.)

It may also be noted here in conclusion that these lines in which there are less than the normal number of stresses are specially difficult to scan to any rigid way, and depend greatly on individual interpretation. In some cases, it would seem that the missing stress falls on a rest; this is specially so where there is a slight logical pause in the sense, whether or not it is marked by a comma, *e.g.*,

To | 'Shakespeare's | 'critic, | '—he be | 'queathes the | 'curse
 And | 'leaves the | 'world to | 'darkness | '—and to | 'me.

Though the latter line could also certainly be read :

And leaves the world to | 'darkness | and to | 'me.

T. S. Omond, in his ' Study of Metre ' already referred to, argues that blank verse is really always a duple measure. He takes his stand on those exceptional lines such as " Rocks, caves, " etc., and contends that these give us the basic rhythm of all the lines. He admits that in normal lines the unstressed syllables are not as long as the stressed ; but he supposes that the remaining time is filled up by rests. On this basis he argues that blank verse reproduces the dignity and sonority of the classical Dactylic Hexameter, the metre of epic poetry. It is difficult to criticise such a theory adequately without the possibility of a practical demonstration of reading or reciting in such a way, but I am quite certain that in the great majority of ordinary lines, such as,

Had cast him out from heaven with all his host,
such a method of scansion if it was really put into practice would produce a ridiculously halting effect.

A few words may be said in conclusion about the use of classical terms in English prosody. Some of them are useful and it would be difficult to avoid them without either cumbersome periphrases or some newly invented jargon, but it is true that they can be misleading as well as an unnecessary burden to students.

" Foot " is a convenient term which may be used if it is clearly understood that it means a " Stress-group," *i.e.*, a group of syllables of which the beginning is marked by one of the regularly recurring stresses of verse. The terms " dimeter " " trimeter," etc., are also very convenient. When we come to the names of the different kinds of feet the question is more difficult. In classical prosody these names referred only to the *length* of the various syllables of the feet. As used by English writers they have commonly been taken to classify feet according to the position of the *stressed* syllable. But

unfortunately writers who have so used them have constantly allowed the length factor to intrude itself, because of their actual associations with the classical metres, and great confusion has resulted. In particular, spondee has constantly been used to describe feet such as the second foot in this line :

The | lowing | herd winds | slowly o'er the lea.

This foot as we have seen above (p. 17) has a very distinctive character through the great length of the unstressed syllable 'winds.' But if we call it a spondee then we are beginning to classify feet by the length of the syllables and not by the stresses. A spondee in stress-scansion would really be a contradiction in terms. For if both the syllables 'herd' and 'wind' really carried *metrical* stress,¹ then the foot would cease to be one foot; each syllable would then be a monosyllabic foot with a slight rest after the stressed syllable, and the line would then become a hexameter. It would be perfectly possible to scan the line like this in isolation, but in the context it would obviously break up the whole structure of the stanza.

In fact if the classical names of feet are to be used at all they should be clearly defined, so that it is understood that they either refer to stress only, or to length only, and this application should be consistently kept to.

If we use them with reference to stress only, then according to the method of scansion suggested in this article there can be only two kinds of feet in English, the trochee and the dactyl. Another name would have to be invented for the foot consisting of one stressed syllable only, though this might perhaps be called a catalectic trochee. On the whole it would seem that in this case there is very little point in retaining the classical names at all.

¹ It has already been explained above that there may be other syllables in the line which would be stressed if the passage were read as prose; but that for metrical purpose some of these stresses must be ignored. It will very often, though not always, happen that such syllables will also be long and therefore give the "spondaic" effect referred to above.

On the other hand, it would be quite possible to use the classical names with strict reference to length only, ignoring stress altogether. But in this case it would have to be made clear that the names would no longer have any reference to the scansion in the way that they did in classical verse, but that they simply indicate roughly the relative lengths of the syllables within the foot-divisions as already determined by the recurring stresses. (As far as I know this has never been done in English poetry: those writers such as Bridges who have tried to write "quantitative verse" have tried to use the quantity as a basis of scansion in the classical sense, either in place of, or in conjunction with, stress—an attempt which has only resulted in hopeless confusion. It would be easy but profitless to analyse and shew the hopeless artificiality of the attempts by English writers in Alcaics, Hendeca-syllables, or other Greek and Latin metres.) If we adopt this special meaning for the terms, with reference to length, we should scan as follows:

'Uñd̄er ā | 'sp̄rēd̄ing | 'chēstnūt | 'trēē thē | 'villāgē |
 'smith̄y | 'stānds.

Here both the stresses, determining the beginning of each foot, and also the length (with the signs used in classical verse) are marked. According to length, the feet would be called dactyl, iambus, trochee, trochee-iambus, iambus, catalectic-trochee. With this system, it would of course be perfectly proper to use the term spondee of a foot such as that in Gray's line quoted above. But it would seem that in this case also the classical terminology would be an unnecessary complication, and at the same time would fail to indicate some of the subtler points of relative length which can be easily shewn by the system of numbers suggested above.

মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত

শ্রীমতী নীহার দাশগুপ্তা

মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত বাংলা ১২৩০ সালের ১২ই মাঘ (ইংরাজি ১৮২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ২৫এ জানুয়ারী) শনিবার যশোহর জিলার অন্তর্গত সাগরদাঁড়ী গ্রামে জন্মগ্রহণ করেন। সেই সময়ে সাগরদাঁড়ীর দত্ত-পরিবারের অবস্থা বিশেষ সচ্ছল ছিল। মধুসূদনের পিতা ও পিতৃবাগণ প্রচুর অর্থ উপার্জন করিতেন, এবং যশোহরে তাঁহাদের খুব প্রতিপত্তি ছিল। তাঁহার পিতা রাজনারায়ণ দত্ত মহাশয় পারসীভাষায় ব্যুৎপন্ন ছিলেন এবং “মুন্সী রাজনারায়ণ” নামে পরিচিত ছিলেন। মধুসূদনের বাল্যাবস্থাতে তিনি কলিকাতার সদর দেওয়ানী আদালতে ওকালতি ব্যবসা আরম্ভ করেন এবং অতি অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে প্রসিদ্ধি লাভ করেন। মধুসূদনের মাতা জাহ্নবী দেবী খুলনা জিলার অন্তর্গত কাটপাড়ার জমিদার গৌরীচরণ ঘোষ মহাশয়ের কন্যা ছিলেন। মধুসূদনের জন্মের পর তাঁহার আরও দুইটি ভ্রাতা জন্মগ্রহণ করেন - কিন্তু এই দুইটিরই শৈশবে মৃত্যু হয়। এই কারণে মধুসূদন পরিবারস্থ প্রত্যেকের একান্ত স্নেহের পাত্র হইয়াছিলেন। তিনি যখন যাহা চাহিতেন তাঁহার গুরুজনেরা স্নেহবশতঃ তাহাই দিতেন। এইজন্য মধুসূদন আত্মসংযম শিক্ষা করিতে পারেন নাই, এবং অমিতব্যয়ী ও স্বেচ্ছাচারী হইয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার পূর্বপুরুষগণ বিলাসী এবং ব্যয়শীল ছিলেন। মধুসূদন এই দোষগুলি উত্তরাধিকার-সূত্রে পাইয়াছিলেন। তিনি পিতা ও পিতৃবাগণের নিকট হইতে শুধু যে দোষই পাইয়াছিলেন তাহা নহে, সদৃশ্যেরও অধিকারী হইয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার পূর্বপুরুষগণের মধ্যে কেহ “কবি” না হইলেও অনেকে সঙ্গীত ও কবিতার অনুরাগী ছিলেন। তাঁহার পিতা বিশেষ সঙ্গীতপ্রিয় ছিলেন। মধুসূদনের মধ্যে এই সকল গুণই ছিল। পিতার মায় তাঁহার মন উন্নত, উদার এবং মহান্ ছিল। সহৃদয়তা, বুদ্ধিমত্তা এবং বিদ্যানুরাগ প্রভৃতি গুণও তিনি পিতার নিকট হইতে পাইয়াছিলেন। মাতা জাহ্নবী দেবীর চরিত্রের বিশেষত্বও তাঁহার চরিত্রে পরিলক্ষিত হয়। মাতার

শ্রায় তিনি পরদুঃখকাতর ও স্নেহপরায়ণ ছিলেন। একাধারে তিনি নানা দোষগুণের সমান অধিকারী হইয়াছিলেন। শৈশব হইতেই তিনি অত্যন্ত অমায়িক এবং কোমল ছিলেন। অত্যধিক আদরের জন্ত তাঁহার সকলপ্রকার আবদার যেমন পূর্ণ হইত, সেইরূপ কোনও প্রার্থী তাঁহার নিকট হইতে বিফল-মনোরথ হইয়া ফিরিয়া যাইত না। তিনি তাঁহার সাধ্যমত সকল দাবী পূর্ণ করিয়া দিতেন। পরিবারস্থ প্রত্যেকটি প্রাণিকে তিনি স্বতন্ত্রভাবে ভালবাসিতেন, কাহারও ছু খের কথা শুনিলে তাঁহার হৃদয় কাতর হইয়া পড়িত। তাঁহার এই কোমল স্বভাবের জন্ত আত্মীয়স্বজনগণ সকলেই তাঁহার একান্ত বশীভূত হইয়াছিলেন।

দেশীয় রীতি-অনুযায়ী মধুসূদন প্রথমে গ্রাম্য পাঠশালাতে গুরুমহাশয়ের নিকট অধ্যয়ন করেন। তখন তাঁহার পিতা কলিকাতায় থাকিতেন। তিনি পাঠশালায় সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ ছাত্র ছিলেন। সর্বোচ্চ স্থান অধিকার করিবার আকাঙ্ক্ষা তাঁহার মনে সর্বদাই বলবতী ছিল। কি প্রকারে সহপাঠীদিগকে লেখাপড়ায় অতিক্রম করিবেন তাহাই তাঁহার প্রধান চিন্তা ছিল। শৈশব হইতে তিনি উদ্দেশ্য-সাধনে দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ ছিলেন। মৃত্যুকাল পর্য্যন্ত তাঁহার জীবনে ইহার জ্বলন্ত দৃষ্টান্ত পাওয়া যায়। তাঁহার পাঠশালার গুরুমহাশয় পারসীভাষাতে ব্যুৎপন্ন ছিলেন। তিনি সর্বদা পারসীভাষায় লিখিত কবিতা আবৃত্তি করিতেন, পাঠশালার ছাত্রগণ একত্র সমবেত হইয়া তাহা মুঞ্চচিন্তে শ্রবণ করিত। ইহা দ্বারাই মধুসূদনের মনে প্রথম কবিতার বীজ রোপিত হইল। গুরুমহাশয়ই তাঁহার হৃদয়ে কাব্যানুরাগ সঞ্চারিত করিয়াছিলেন। কাব্যের শ্রায় সঙ্গীতেও তিনি অত্যন্ত অনুরক্ত ছিলেন। সঙ্গীতে প্রগাঢ় অনুরাগের জন্ত তিনি মাঝে মাঝে গৃহ পরিত্যাগ করিয়া মজলিসে যাইতেন। তিনি নিজেও ভাল সঙ্গীত জানিতেন। বাল্যকাল হইতে মধুসূদন অত্যন্ত মেধাবী ছিলেন। তাঁহার স্মরণশক্তিও খুব তীক্ষ্ণ ছিল। মাতার নিকট শুনিয়া রামায়ণ, মহাভারত প্রভৃতি পৌরাণিক গ্রন্থগুলির অধিকাংশ মুখস্থ করিয়া ফেলিতেন। মধুসূদনের সাহিত্যিক জীবনের প্রধান প্রেরণাই ছিল তাঁহার জনক-জননীর আদর্শ, শিক্ষকগণের কবিতাপ্রিয়তা, স্বীয় কাব্যানুরাগ ও সঙ্গীতানুরাগ ও সাগরদাঁড়ীর প্রাকৃতিক সৌন্দর্য্য। এই সকল বস্তু একসঙ্গে মিলিত হইয়া তাঁহার ভবিষ্যৎ জীবন গঠন করিয়াছিল। মধুসূদনের প্রতিভার বিকাশের প্রধান সহায়ক ছিল রামায়ণ ও মহাভারত। জাতীয় জীবন-গঠনের প্রধান উদ্দীপনা এই জাতীয় প্রাচীন মহাকাব্য। মধুসূদনের শ্রায় বহু কবি এই গ্রন্থগুলি পাঠ করিয়া অনুপ্রাণিত হইয়াছেন। এই প্রেরণা শুধু কবিরাই অনুভব করেন নাই। “রাজা পরীক্ষিত ইহা হইতে খোর

অনুতাপ-যন্ত্রণায় মুক্তি পাইয়াছিলেন। শিবাজী ইহা হইতে স্বদেশপ্রেম শিক্ষা করিয়াছিলেন। তুলসীদাস ইহা হইতে ধর্মজীবন লাভ করিয়াছিলেন।” *

মধুসূদন বালাবধি প্রকৃতির উপাসক ছিলেন। প্রকৃতিদেবী চিরদিনই নীরব। তিনি নিজের সৌন্দর্য্যদ্বারা কত অ-কবিকে কবি করিয়া তুলিতেছেন, তাঁহার সংস্পর্শে কত নীরস মনুষ্য-জীবন সজীব ও রসময় হইয়া উঠিতেছে। পৃথিবীর কোনও কাব্য-গ্রন্থ অথবা উপদেষ্টার দ্বারা ইহা সম্ভব নহে। মধুসূদন তাঁহার জন্মভূমি সাগরদাঁড়ীর সৌন্দর্য্য দেখিতে দেখিতে তন্ময় হইয়া যাইতেন। গ্রামে অবস্থানকালে তিনি সদাসর্ব্বদা কপোতাক্ষ নদীতটে, বনে, অরণ্যে ঘুরিয়া বেড়াইতেন। জ্যোৎস্নালোকে নদীতীরে ভ্রমণকালে বিহঙ্গকুলের সঙ্গীতে এবং কপোতাক্ষ-তটের প্রাকৃতিক সৌন্দর্য্যে তিনি এত বিমোহিত হইয়া পড়িতেন যে গৃহে ফিরিবার কথা ভুলিয়া যাইতেন। নিশীথে নিস্তব্ধ গ্রামটি যখন তিনি দেখিতেন তখন তাঁহার হৃদয় আনন্দে পরিপ্লুত হইয়া উঠিত। যশোহর জিলার এই ছোট গ্রামটি প্রকৃতপক্ষে কবির উপযুক্ত ধাত্রী। স্কটের ভাষায় ইহাকে “meet nurse for a poetic child” বলা যায়। কপোতাক্ষ নদী প্রায়ই তাঁহাকে স্বপ্নরাজ্যে লইয়া যাইত। একদিন নদীতটে ভ্রমণকালে তিনি বলিয়াছিলেন, “কপোতাক্ষ! যে তোমার তীরে পাতার কুটীরে বাস করিতে পারে সেও পরম সুখী।” এই নদীকে তিনি দুঃখশ্রোতের সহিত তুলনা করিয়াছেন। কপোতাক্ষ নদী তাঁহার এত প্রিয় ছিল যে সুদূর ফরাসী দেশে বসিয়া তিনি ইহাকে স্মরণ করিয়া লিখিয়াছেন :—

“সতত, হে নদ, তুমি পড় মোর মনে।

সতত তোমারি কথা ভাবি এ বিরলে ;

সতত (যেমতি লোক নিশার স্বপনে

শোনে মায়া-যন্ত্রধ্বনি) তব কলকলে—

জুড়াই এ কাজ আমি ভ্রান্তির ছলনে।—

বঙ্গদেশে দেখিয়াছি বহু নদ-দলে,

কিস্ত এ স্নেহের তৃষা মিটে কার জলে ?

দুঃখশ্রোতারূপী তুমি জন্মভূমি-স্তনে।”—(কপোতাক্ষ নদ)

উপযুক্ত সময়ে তিনি বিদ্যাশিক্ষার্থ কলিকাতায় আসিলেন। প্রথমে তিনি খিদিরপুর ইংরাজী স্কুলে ভর্তি হন, পরে ১৮৩৭ খৃষ্টাব্দে তিনি হিন্দু কলেজে প্রবেশ

শ্রীমতী নীহার দাশগুপ্তা

করেন। হিন্দু কলেজের খ্যাতি তখন চতুর্দিকে বিস্তৃত। এই বিদ্যালয়ে তখন বহু খ্যাতনামা অধ্যাপক অধ্যাপনা করিতেন। মধুসূদনের সমসাময়িক ছাত্রগণের মধ্যে রাজনারায়ণ বসু ও ভূদেব মুখোপাধ্যায় বঙ্গসমাজে সুপরিচিত। হিন্দু কলেজে প্রবেশ করিয়া মধুসূদনের বিদ্যানুরাগ গভীরতর হইল। অতি অল্পদিনের মধ্যেই তিনি একজন মেধাবী ছাত্র বলিয়া খ্যাতিলাভ করিলেন। তিনি এরূপ প্রতিভার পরিচয় দিয়াছিলেন যে তাঁহার জনৈক সহাধ্যায়ী মন্তব্য প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন, “মধু আমাদের মধ্যে ঔজ্জ্বল্যে তারকামণ্ডলীর মধ্যে বৃহস্পতির স্থায় ছিল।” ইংরেজী সাহিত্যে তাঁহার সহপাঠীদের মধ্যে কেহই তাঁহাকে পরাস্ত করিতে পারিত না। প্রতি বৎসর তিনি অনেক প্রতিভাবান ছাত্রকে অতিক্রম করিয়া উচ্চতর শ্রেণীতে উত্তীর্ণ হইতেন এবং বৃত্তি লাভ করিতেন। মাত্র ছয় বৎসরের মধ্যে তিনি বর্ণপরিচয় হইতে আরম্ভ করিয়া আধুনিক কালে যাহাকে বি.এ. শ্রেণী বলা যায় সেই পর্য্যন্ত পড়িয়াছিলেন। মধুসূদনের অধ্যয়নকালে কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় স্থাপিত হয় নাই। তখন এণ্ট্রান্স ও বি.এ. পরীক্ষা অবিদিত ছিল। তখন ছাত্রগণকে জুনিয়র ও সিনিয়র স্কলারশিপ পরীক্ষা দিতে হইত। সিনিয়র দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণীতে পড়িবার কালে প্রথম শ্রেণীর ছাত্রগণের সহিত প্রতিযোগিতায় প্রথম স্থান অধিকার করিয়া মধুসূদন স্বর্ণপদক লাভ করেন। তাঁহার জনৈক বন্ধু বলিয়াছেন, “বয়সে মধু আমা অপেক্ষা ছোট ছিল, কিন্তু এমনি তাহার বিদ্যাবুদ্ধি যে আমাদের অনেক পরে হিন্দু কলেজে ভর্তি হইয়া লক্ষ লক্ষ নিম্নশ্রেণীসকল অতিক্রম করিয়া অপেক্ষাকৃত অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে আমাদের সহাধ্যায়ী হইয়াছিল।” ভূদেব মুখোপাধ্যায় মধুসূদনের সুহৃদ ও সতীর্থ ছিলেন। তিনি লিখিয়াছেন, “কর্মক্ষেত্রে অবতরণ করিয়া ক্রমে ক্রমে আমাকে অনূন কুড়ি লক্ষ ছাত্রের সংস্রবে আসিতে হইয়াছিল, কিন্তু মধুর গায় প্রতিভা আর কাহাতেও কখন দেখি নাই।” পাঠ্যাবস্থা হইতেই মধুসূদনের সাহিত্যের প্রতি প্রগাঢ় অনুরাগ ছিল। তিনি বহুগ্রন্থপাঠী ছাত্র বলিয়া পরিচিত ছিলেন, ইংরেজী রচনায় তাঁহার সমকক্ষ ছাত্র অতি অল্পই ছিল। অগাণ্ড ছাত্রগণের সহিত মিলিত হইয়া তিনি একখানি হস্তলিখিত সংবাদপত্র প্রচার করিয়াছিলেন।

অত্যধিক সাহিত্যানুরাগের জন্ম মধুসূদন গণিতাশুশীলনের প্রতি বিশেষ লক্ষ্য রাখিতেন না। তিনি গণিত অধ্যয়ন একপ্রকার ছাড়িয়া দিয়াছিলেন। একদিন শেক্সপীয়র ও নিউটনের শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব লইয়া ছাত্রগণের মধ্যে তুমুল তর্ক চলিতেছিল। মধুসূদন তখন মন্তব্য প্রকাশ করিয়াছিলেন, “শেক্সপীয়র চেষ্টা করিলে নিউটন

মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত

হইতে পারিতেন, কিন্তু নিউটন চেম্বা করিলে কখনও শেখপীর হইতে পারিতেন না।” একদিন গণিত ক্লাসে তিনি একটি কঠিন অঙ্ক কবিতা সমবেত ছাত্রগণকে এবং গণিত অধ্যাপক রিজ্ সাহেবকে বিস্মিত করিয়া ইহারই দৃষ্টান্ত দেখাইয়াছিলেন। গণিতশাস্ত্র তিনি জানিতেন না, ইহা ভুল, কিন্তু ইহা তাঁহার ভাল লাগিত না বলিয়া ইহার গবেষণায় তিনি সুখ পাইতেন না।

স্বনামধন্য Captain D. L. Richardson তখন হিন্দু কলেজের অধ্যাপক ও ইংরেজী ভাষার অধ্যাপক ছিলেন। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর অনেক খ্যাতনামা বঙ্গসম্প্রদায়ের চরিত্রগঠনে তিনি সহায়তা করিয়াছিলেন। সাহিত্যে তাঁহার প্রগাঢ় জ্ঞান ছিল। তিনি একজন সুলেখক ছিলেন এবং ইংরেজী ভাষায় বহু কবিতা রচনা করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার ছাত্রগণের মধ্যে কবিশক্তি উদ্দীপিত করিবার জন্য তিনি বিশেষ চেষ্টা করিতেন, তৎকালীন ছাত্রসমাজ তাঁহাকে আদর্শস্বরূপ মনে করিত এবং তাঁহার অনুপ্রেরণায় তাহারা ইংরেজী ভাষায় সাহিত্য রচনা করিবার চেষ্টা করিত। মধুসূদন Richardson সাহেবের অত্যন্ত অনুগত ছাত্র ছিলেন। তাঁহার অনুকরণে তিনি ইংরেজী কবিতা লিখিতে আরম্ভ করেন। Richardson সাহেবের কবিতার ন্যায় কবিতা রচনা করাই মধুসূদনের জীবনের সঙ্কল্প হইয়া উঠিল। কবিত্বের যে বীজ শৈশব হইতেই তাঁহার হৃদয়ে স্থান পাইয়াছিল তাহাই Richardsonএর আদর্শে অঙ্কুরিত হইল। Richardson মধুসূদনকে উৎসাহিত করিবার জন্য স্ব-সম্পাদিত পত্রিকাতে তাঁহার কবিতাবলী প্রকাশ করিতেন।

মধুসূদন যখন বিদ্যাশিক্ষার্থ কলিকাতায় আসেন তখন সমগ্র বঙ্গদেশে পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষা ও সভ্যতার আবহাওয়া বহিতেছিল। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে ইংরেজী সাহিত্য প্রচলনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বাঙ্গালীর চিন্তা এবং ভাবের পরিবর্তন দেখা গেল। পাশ্চাত্য সাহিত্য ও বিজ্ঞান প্রাচীন আদর্শের আমূল পরিবর্তন করিল। শিক্ষিত দেশবাসিগণ প্রতীচ্য সাহিত্যের প্রতি অত্যন্ত আকৃষ্ট হইয়া পড়িলেন; ফলে বঙ্গভাষা তাঁহাদের অবহেলার বস্তু হইল। বাঙ্গালীর মনে পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষা ও সভ্যতা নিত্য নবীন যে প্রেরণা আনিতেছিল তাহাতে সমস্ত বাঙ্গালী জাতি নিজ জাতীয় সংস্কৃতি-সম্বন্ধে ক্রমশঃ অজ্ঞ হইয়া উঠিতেছিল। মনুষ্যত্ব অর্জনের পক্ষে পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষা ও সভ্যতা কল্যাণকর ছিল না। ইংরেজী-শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালীগণ অনেকে নিজস্ব মনোভাব ইংরেজী ভাষায় প্রকাশ করিবার প্রচেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। মধুসূদন দত্ত ইহাদের অন্যতম। বাংলাভাষা-সম্বন্ধে তাঁহার অভিমত ছিল যে, এই ভাষা শিক্ষা করা অপেক্ষা ভুলিয়া যাওয়াই শ্রেয়ঃ। পাশ্চাত্য আবহাওয়া তাঁহাকে মাতৃভাষার

প্রতি এইরূপ বিরূপ করিয়াছিল। পাঠ্যাবস্থাতে তিনি বাংলা সাহিত্যের চর্চা একপ্রকার করেন নাই বলিলেই চলে। বাংলাভাষার প্রতি অশ্রদ্ধা সত্ত্বেও তিনি হিন্দু কলেজে অধ্যয়নকালে বাংলায়ই প্রথম কবিতা লিখিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার বাল্যবন্ধু গৌরদাস বসাকের একান্ত অনুরোধে তিনি ‘বর্ষাঋতু’-সম্বন্ধে একটি কবিতা রচনা করেন। এই কবিতায় বহু ত্রুটি পরিলক্ষিত হয়। কিন্তু মধুসূদনের বঙ্গভাষায় লিখিত প্রথম কবিতাটি উদ্ধৃত করা আবশ্যিক :—

“গভীর গর্জ্জন সদা করে জলধর,
উথলিল নদ নদী ধরণী উপর।
স্নানগী রমণ লয়ে, স্নখে কেলি করে,
দানবাদি দেব যক্ষ স্তুতিত অন্তরে।
সমীরণ ঘন ঘন বান বান রব,
বারুণ প্রবল দেখি প্রবল প্রভাব।
সাদীন হইয়া পাছে পরাদীন হয়,
কলহ করয়ে কোন মতে শাস্ত নয়।”

উপরি-উক্ত পঙ্ক্তিগুলির প্রথম বর্ণগুলি একত্র করিলে ‘গউরদাস বসাক’ নামটি হয়। মধুসূদন ‘হিমঋতু’-সম্বন্ধে আর একটি কবিতা লিখিয়াছিলেন। পরিণত বয়সে মধুসূদন তাহা পাঠ করিলে নিশ্চয়ই লজ্জিত হইতেন। ইহাকে কবিতা আখ্যা দেওয়া যায় না। এই দুইটি ব্যতিরেকে মধুসূদন ছাত্রাবস্থায় বাংলাভাষায় আর কিছু রচনা করিয়াছিলেন বলিয়া জানা যায় নাই। হিন্দু কলেজে অধ্যয়নকালে এই কবিতাদ্বয় ব্যতীত সকল রচনাই তিনি ইংরেজী ভাষায় লিখিয়াছিলেন। কবি Byron তখন তাঁহার আদর্শস্বরূপ ছিলেন। ইংরেজী ভাষায় গদ্য- ও পদ্য-রচনাতে তাঁহার সহাধ্যায়ীদিগের মধ্যে কেহই তাঁহার সমকক্ষ ছিলেন না। একবার স্ত্রী-শিক্ষা-সম্বন্ধে সর্বোৎকৃষ্ট প্রবন্ধ-রচনার প্রতিযোগিতায় তিনি প্রথম এবং ভূদেববাবু দ্বিতীয় স্থান অধিকার করেন। মাত্র অষ্টাদশ বৎসর বয়সে মধুসূদন বঙ্গদেশে মুদ্রিত প্রধান ইংরেজী সাহিত্য-বিষয়ক পত্রিকাগুলিতে লিখিতে আরম্ভ করিলেন। এমন কি, ইংলণ্ডের কোনও কোনও পত্রিকাতে স্থায়ী কবিতা রচনা করিয়া প্রেরণ করিতেন।

মধুসূদন শৈশব হইতেই যথেষ্টাচারী ও বিলাসী ছিলেন। হিন্দু কলেজে অধ্যয়নকালে তিনি উচ্ছৃঙ্খল হইয়া উঠিলেন। আত্মবিলাসী মধুসূদন যাহাতে স্তব্ধবোধ করিতেন, নীতি-বিরুদ্ধ বা সমাজ-বিরুদ্ধ হইলেও অকুণ্ঠিতচিত্তে তাহা

করিতেন। সেই সময়ে হিন্দু কলেজে কলিকাতার সম্ভ্রান্তবংশীয় বহু ছাত্র অধ্যয়ন করিতেন। মধুসূদনের অবস্থা সচ্ছল ছিল, তিনি বিলাসিতায় সহপাঠীদিগের সমকক্ষ হইয়া উঠিলেন। মধুসূদন হিন্দু কলেজে প্রবেশ করিবার পূর্বেই ডি রোজিও (Derozio) সাহেব পরলোকগমন করিয়াছিলেন। তথাপি ডি রোজিওর প্রভাব হিন্দু কলেজের ছাত্রদিগের উপর—এমন কি বাংলার সমগ্র যুবকমণ্ডলীর উপর—যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে পরিলক্ষিত হইত। ডি রোজিওর শিক্ষায় যেরূপ সফল হইয়াছিল সেইরূপ কুফলও দেখা গিয়াছিল। ডি রোজিও তাঁহার ছাত্রদিগকে ইংরেজী সাহিত্য-জ্ঞানের দিকে বহুদূর অগ্রসর করাইয়া দিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু তিনি শুধু পুঁথিগত বিদ্যা শিক্ষা দিয়াই ক্ষান্ত হইতেন না, ছাত্রগণকে তৎকালীন সামাজিক ও ধর্মবিষয়ক আন্দোলনে যোগদান করিতে উৎসাহিত করিতেন। যাহা পুরাতন তাহার উপর অন্ধ বিশ্বাস স্থাপন করিয়া কুসংস্কারে নিমজ্জিত থাকা ভাল নহে—ইহাই তিনি শিক্ষা দিতেন। তিনি ছাত্রদিগকে নিজ বিবেক-দ্বারা সকল জিনিষ পরীক্ষা করিবার উপদেশ দিতেন। তাঁহার হিন্দুশাস্ত্র-সম্বন্ধে জ্ঞান ছিল না। তখন কলিকাতায় হিন্দুদের কুসংস্কার দূর করিবার নিমিত্ত স্থানে স্থানে তুমুল আন্দোলন চলিতেছিল। বিধবা-বিবাহ-প্রচলন এবং ব্রাহ্মধর্ম-প্রচার করা তৎকালীন হিন্দুসমাজে আলোচ্য বিষয় হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল। ডি রোজিও ভারতবর্ষকে শ্রদ্ধার চক্ষে দেখিতেন সত্য, কিন্তু হিন্দুধর্ম কুসংস্কারপূর্ণ বলিয়া তাঁহার ধারণা ছিল। তাঁহার অনুগত ছাত্রগণ হিন্দুধর্মের বিরুদ্ধাচরণ করিতে লাগিলেন। তাঁহারা হিন্দুধর্ম-নিষিদ্ধ খাণ্ড গ্রহণ করিয়া আনন্দ অনুভব করিতেন। ছাত্রসমাজে সুরাপান ও গোমাংস-ভক্ষণ প্রচলিত হইল। গোখাদক জাতিরা যখন পৃথিবীতে সর্বাপেক্ষা শক্তিশালী তখন বাঙ্গালীকেও গোখাদক হইতে হইবে বলিয়া তাঁহার রাজপথ দিয়া গোমাংস খাইতে খাইতে চলিতেন এবং লোকের বাড়ীতে ভুক্তাংশ নিক্ষেপ করিতেন। কলিকাতার এই আবহাওয়ার মধ্যে অসংযতচিত্ত যুবক মধুসূদন উচ্ছৃঙ্খল ও স্বেচ্ছাচারী হইয়া পড়িলেন। তিনি সুরাপান ও নিষিদ্ধ-খাণ্ড-ভক্ষণ করিতে আরম্ভ করিলেন এবং দেশীয় আচার-ব্যবহার ত্যাগ করিলেন। ক্রমশঃ তিনি ধর্মাস্তুর গ্রহণ করিতে মনস্থ করিলেন। তাঁহার পিতার ভয়ে খ্রীষ্টীয় যাজকগণ তাঁহাকে খ্রীষ্টধর্মে দীক্ষিত করিবার কয়েক দিবস পূর্ব হইতেই Fort William এ আবদ্ধ করিয়া রাখিয়াছিলেন। নির্দিষ্ট দিবসে Old Mission Church এ Archdeacon Deatryর নিকট মধুসূদন খ্রীষ্টধর্মে দীক্ষিত হইলেন (৯ই ফেব্রুয়ারী, ১৮৪৩ খৃষ্টাব্দ)। এই দিন হইতেই মধুসূদনের নাম হইল

“মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত”। এই নবধর্ম-পরিগ্রহ উপলক্ষ্যে মধুসূদন একটি ধর্ম-সঙ্গীত রচনা করিয়াছিলেন। এই সঙ্গীতটি তাঁহার দীক্ষার সময়ে সমবেত খ্রীষ্টীয় নরনারীগণ উচ্চকণ্ঠে গাহিয়াছিলেন :—

I

Long sunk in superstition's night,
By Sin and Satan driven,—
I saw not,—cared not for the light
That leads the blind to heaven.

II.

I sat in darkness—Reason's eye
Was shut—was closed in me ;—
I hasten'd to Eternity
O'er Error's dreadful sea !

* * * * *

IV

I've broke Affection's tenderest ties
For my blest Saviour's sake :—
All, all I love beneath the skies
Lord ! I for thee forsake !

জ্ঞানপিপাসু মধুসূদন উদ্দেশ্য-সাধনে চিরদিন দৃঢ়ত্ব ছিলেন। ইংলণ্ড-গমন তাঁহার আশৈশব-পোষিত কামনা। ধর্মাস্তর-গ্রহণে তাঁহাকে সেই সুযোগ দিবে ভাবিয়া তিনি স্বধর্ম ত্যাগ করিয়াছিলেন। তৎকালে ইংলণ্ড-গমন হিন্দুসমাজে ধর্মবিরুদ্ধ এবং সমাজবিরুদ্ধ ছিল। মধুসূদনের পিতামাতা তাঁহার জন্ম একটি পাত্রীও মনোনীত করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহাদের নিদ্দিষ্ট অশিক্ষিত পাত্রী অপেক্ষা স্বীয় মনোনীত খ্রীষ্টান-কন্যার পাণিগ্রহণ করাও তাঁহার ধর্মাস্তর-গ্রহণের অগতর কারণ ছিল। রেভারেণ্ড কৃষ্ণমোহন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের জ্যেষ্ঠা কন্যা দেবিকার সহিত মধুসূদনের গভীর প্রণয় ছিল। কিন্তু তাঁহার মতপান-দোষের জন্ম এই বিবাহ হয় নাই। মধুসূদন স্বধর্ম ত্যাগ করিলেও পিতামাতার একমাত্র পুত্র বলিয়া স্নেহবশতঃ তাঁহারা তাঁহাকে

ত্যাগ করিলেন না। খ্রীষ্টধর্ম-গ্রহণের কিছুদিন পর তিনি শিবপুর বিশপ্স কলেজে পড়িবার ইচ্ছা প্রকাশ করিলেন। তাঁহার পিতা পুত্রের অভিলাষ কখনও অপূর্ণ রাখিতেন না। সুতরাং মধুসূদন বিশপ্স কলেজে ভর্তি হইলেন, কলেজের যাবতীয় ব্যয়ভার তিনি বহন করিতে স্বীকৃত হইলেন। এই কলেজে মধুসূদন চারি বৎসর কাল অধ্যয়ন করেন। হিন্দু কলেজ যেমন মধুসূদনের রচনা-শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্র, বিশপ্স কলেজ সেইরূপ তাঁহার ভাষা-শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্র। এই কলেজে অধ্যয়নকালে তিনি মাতৃভাষা ব্যতিরেকে বারটি (১২) ভাষা শিক্ষা করিয়াছিলেন। নানাবিধ ভাষাতে ব্যুৎপত্তি না থাকিলে সাহিত্য-সাধনায় সম্যকভাবে সিদ্ধিলাভ করা যায় না, এই ধারণায় তিনি বহুভাষাবিদ হইলেন। তিনি গ্রীক, লাতিন, হিব্রু, ইতালীয়, ফরাসী, তামিল, তেলুগু এবং সংস্কৃত প্রভৃতি ক্লাসিক্যাল ও আধুনিক ভাষাসমূহে জ্ঞান অর্জন করিয়াছিলেন। ইংরেজী ভাষাতে ও সাহিত্যে তিনি যে চিরদিনই নিমগ্ন ছিলেন, তাহার প্রকৃষ্ট পরিচয় আমরা পূর্বের বিবৃত করিয়াছি। বিশপ্স কলেজে তিনি বহুভাষাবিদ (Linguist) সুপণ্ডিত বলিয়া খ্যাতি লাভ করিলেন। ছুরদৃষ্টক্রমে তিনি সদাচার ও আত্মসংযম শিক্ষা করিতে সক্ষম হইলেন না। তিনি জ্ঞানের দিকে যতই অগ্রসর হইতে লাগিলেন, তাঁহার বিলাসিতা ও উচ্ছৃঙ্খলতা ততই বৃদ্ধি পাইতে লাগিল। ক্রমশঃ তিনি বিলাসিতার স্রোতে ভাসিয়া চলিলেন। কোনও দিন মধুসূদন সংযমী পুরুষ ছিলেন না, কিন্তু এই কলেজে অধ্যয়নকালে ব্যভিচারের চরম সীমায় উপনীত হইলেন। একদিন বিশপ্স কলেজে নৈশ ভোজ-উপলক্ষে যুরোপীয় ছাত্রগণকে মত্ত বিতরণ করিতে সব মত্ত নিঃশেষ হইয়া যায়। দেশীয় ছাত্রগণ আর মত্ত পাইলেন না। মধুসূদন তাঁহার প্রাপ্য মত্ত না পাইয়া ক্রোধে উন্মত্ত হইয়া টেবিলের উপর গ্রাস চূর্ণ করিয়া সদর্পে সেই স্থান ত্যাগ করিলেন। তাঁহার ঔদ্ধত্যের জন্ম কলেজের অধ্যাপকগণ অত্যন্ত বিরক্ত হইলেন। তাঁহার কোমল, বিনয়ী ও নম্র চরিত্রে ক্রমশঃ ঔদ্ধত্য দেখা যাইতে লাগিল। ক্রমে পিতার সহিত তাঁহার মনোমালিঙ্গের সূত্রপাত হইল। আজন্ম-হিন্দুধর্ম্মাচারী পিতা পুত্রের ধর্ম্মান্তর-গ্রহণও ক্ষমা করিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু তাঁহার ঔদ্ধত্যের প্রশ্রয় দিলেন না। মধুসূদনের দুর্ব্যবহারের জন্ম পিতা বিরূপ হইয়া তাঁহার কলেজের মাসহারা বন্ধ করিয়া দিলেন। এইরূপে পিতাপুত্রের সুমিষ্ট সম্বন্ধ চিরদিনের জন্য ঘুচিয়া গেল। ধর্ম্মান্তর-গ্রহণের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে মধুসূদনের আবালা-সুহৃদ ও সতীর্থগণ তাঁহাকে পূর্বের ন্যায় প্রীতির চক্ষে দেখিতেন না। সকলের সঙ্গে তাঁহার অপ্রীতিকর সম্বন্ধ স্থাপিত হইল। স্বদেশ তাঁহার নিকট প্রবাস বলিয়া প্রতীয়মান

হইতে লাগিল। অত্যধিক মানসিক যন্ত্রণায় অধীর হইয়া তিনি বঙ্গদেশ পরিত্যাগ করিবার ইচ্ছা করিলেন। ভাগ্যোন্নতির আশায় তিনি পূর্ব হইতেই স্বদেশ-ত্যাগের পরিকল্পনা করিতেছিলেন, কিন্তু এক্ষণে সকল আত্মীয়স্বজনের সহিত মনোমালিঙ্গের জগ্ন তিনি ক্ষুব্ধ ও অশান্ত হৃদয় লইয়া সুদূর মাদ্রাজ গমন করিলেন। তাঁহার বঙ্গদেশ-পরিত্যাগের পরিকল্পনা যাত্রার পূর্বকক্ষণ পর্য্যন্ত গোপন ছিল। মধুসূদন যখন বঙ্গদেশ হইতে বহুদূরে, মাদ্রাজে উপনীত হইলেন তখন তাঁহার হাতে একটি কপর্দকও ছিল না। নিঃসহায়, নিঃসম্বল মধুসূদন তখন স্থানীয় খ্রীষ্টীয় সম্প্রদায়ের নিকট আশ্রয় ভিক্ষা করিলেন। খ্রীষ্টানগণ স্বদেশচ্যুত নিরাশ্রয়কে আশ্রয় দিলেন। হিন্দুসমাজে বিধর্মী মধুসূদন ঘৃণার পাত্র ছিলেন, সুতরাং তাঁহাদের নিকট হইতে তিনি কোনও প্রকার সাহায্য পাইলেন না। যে সামান্য অর্থ লইয়া তিনি স্বদেশ ত্যাগ করিয়াছিলেন, তাহার সমস্তই পাথেয় প্রভৃতিতে ব্যয় হওয়ায় তিনি অত্যন্ত দুঃস্থায় পড়িলেন। তারপর, তিনি মাদ্রাজে পৌঁছিবার ক্রিয়াকাল পরেই দুঃস্থ বসন্তরোগে আক্রান্ত হইলেন। প্রবাসী বন্ধুগণের সেবাসুশ্রমায় তিনি আরোগ্য লাভ করিলেন, কিন্তু অর্থান্ধতার জগ্ন তাঁহার দুঃখকষ্টের অবসান হইল না। খ্রীষ্টানগণ তাঁহার প্রতি সহানুভূতি প্রকাশ করিয়া তাঁহাকে স্থানীয় ফিরিন্দী অনাথ বালকবালিকাগণের বিদ্যালয়ে শিক্ষকপদে নিযুক্ত করিলেন। তাঁহাদের একান্ত অনুকম্পায় মধুসূদন অকূলসাগরে কূল পাইলেন। উক্ত বিদ্যালয়ে ক্রিয়াকাল শিক্ষকতা করিবার পর তিনি রেবেকা ম্যাক্‌ডালিস্ নাম্নী একটি যুবতীর পাণিগ্রহণে অভিলাষী হইলেন। এই মহিলাটি তখন ঐ বিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যয়ন করিতেন। মাদ্রাজের এডভোকেট জেনারেল জর্জ নটন সাহেবের সাহায্যে মধুসূদন তাঁহার মনোনীত পাত্রী রেবেকাকে বিবাহ করিলেন। *

বিবাহ করিবার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তাঁহার ব্যয় বৃদ্ধি পাইল, সুতরাং আর্থিক উন্নতির জগ্ন তিনি মাদ্রাজের প্রধান প্রধান সংবাদপত্রগুলিতে লিখিতে আরম্ভ করিলেন। সাহিত্যের যে বীজ শৈশব হইতেই তাঁহার অন্তরে নিহিত ছিল দারিদ্র্যের সংঘর্ষে তাহা অঙ্কুরিত হইবার সুযোগ পাইল। এতকাল মধুসূদন শুধু তাঁহার অবসরকালে চিত্রবিনোদনের জগ্ন সাহিত্যসেবা করিয়া আসিতেছিলেন, কিন্তু এক্ষণে তিনি তাঁহার জীবিকার্জনের জগ্ন সাহিত্য-সেবা আরম্ভ করিলেন। তিনি Madras Circular and General Chronicle, Madras Spectator এবং Athenaeum

প্রভৃতি সংবাদপত্রে লিখিয়া অর্থ উপার্জন করিতে লাগিলেন। অতি অল্পদিনের মধ্যেই মাদ্রাজে সুধীসমাজে তিনি একজন সুলেখক বলিয়া খ্যাতি লাভ করিলেন। মধুসূদন Athenaeum পত্রিকাখানির সহকারী সম্পাদকের কার্য করিয়া এক্রপ যশ অর্জন করিলেন যে পরে তিনি ঐ পত্রিকার সম্পাদকের পদ প্রাপ্ত হন। Madras Circular পত্রিকাখানিতে তিনি কবিতায় একটি উপাখ্যান লিখিয়া জনসাধারণকে মুগ্ধ করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহাদিগের প্রশংসায় উৎসাহিত হইয়া তিনি ইহা গ্রন্থরূপে প্রকাশ করিলেন। গ্রন্থখানির নাম The Captive Lady। ইহার বিষয়বস্তুর তাৎপর্য বিশেষ কিছুই ছিল না, কিন্তু ভাব ও ভাষার লালিত্য, অলঙ্কারবিশ্বাস এবং ছন্দোমাধুর্যের জন্য গ্রন্থখানি মাদ্রাজে শিক্ষিত-সমাজে প্রভূত প্রশংসা পাইয়াছিল। রাজা জয়চন্দ্র পৃথ্বীরাজের হস্ত হইতে রক্ষার জন্য রাজকুমারী সংযুক্তাকে একটি গিরিদুর্গে আবদ্ধ করিয়া রাখিয়াছিলেন। পৃথ্বীরাজ এই সংবাদ পাইয়া ভাটবেশে সেখানে প্রবেশ করিয়া সংযুক্তাকে হরণ করেন। পরে মুসলমান তাঁহার রাজ্য আক্রমণ করিলে তিনি যুদ্ধে পরাস্ত হইয়া অগ্নিতে প্রবেশ করিয়া প্রাণত্যাগ করেন। ইহাই The Captive Ladyর প্রতিপাত্ত বিষয়। এই উপাখ্যানটিতে পাশ্চাত্য কবিগণের প্রভাব অত্যধিক পরিস্ফুট হইয়াছে। তখন পর্য্যন্ত তিনি সংস্কৃত ভাষা ও সাহিত্যের কোমল-মধুর শব্দ বা ভাবের সঙ্গে পরিচিত হন নাই। সুতরাং বিদেশীয় কবিগণের ন্যায় তিনিও তেজঃপ্রদীপ্ত ভাষা প্রয়োগ করিয়াছেন। মধুসূদন স্বীয় নামের পরিবর্তে সর্বদা Timothy Penpoem, Esq. ছদ্মনাম ব্যবহার করিতেন। The Captive Ladyর সঙ্গে ভিসন্স অব্ দি পাস্ট (Visions of the Past) নামক আর একটি কবিতা প্রকাশিত হইয়াছিল।

মধুসূদন মাদ্রাজে যথেষ্ট খ্যাতিলাভ করিলেন সত্য, কিন্তু ইহাতে তাঁহার হৃদয় শান্তি পাইল না। তিনি সুখস্বচ্ছন্দ্যের জন্য জগতে আসেন নাই। দুঃখে ও নিরাশায় তাঁহার দিন অতিবাহিত হইতে লাগিল। পত্নী রেবেকার সহিত তাঁহার বিবাহ-বন্ধন বিচ্ছিন্ন হইল। অসংযমের জন্য তিনি সুখী হইতে পারিলেন না। ইহারই কিয়ৎকাল পরে তিনি মাদ্রাজ প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজের এক শিক্ষকের কন্যা এমিলিয়া হেনরিয়েটা সোফিয়াকে বিবাহ করিলেন। এই মহিলাই তাঁহার সহধর্ম্মিণীরূপে পরিচিত।

মাদ্রাজে প্রায় প্রত্যেক সংবাদপত্রেই মধুসূদনের কাব্যের সুখ্যাতি প্রকাশিত হইতে লাগিল। কিন্তু মধুসূদন ইহাতে পরিতৃপ্ত হইতে পারিলেন না।

মুদ্রায়ন্ত্রের ঋণ পরিশোধ করিতে তাঁহার মন অধীর হইয়া উঠিল। তিনি আশা করিলেন, মাদ্রাজের শিক্ষিত সম্প্রদায় তাঁহাকে অর্থ-দ্বারা উৎসাহিত না করিলেও কলিকাতার কৃতবিত্তগণ তাঁহার কাব্যের সমুচিত সমাদর করিবেন। কিন্তু যখন The Captive Lady সমাদরের পরিবর্তে উপেক্ষা পাইল তখন মধুসূদনের উৎসাহ উত্তম একেবারে নিবিয়া গেল। কলিকাতার কোনও কোনও সম্পাদক তাঁহাকে ব্যঙ্গোক্তি করিতেও দ্বিধা বোধ করিলেন না। তাঁহার একান্ত সুহৃদগণ The Captive Lady বিক্রয় করিবার চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু আশানুরূপ কৃতকার্য্য হইলেন না। তৎকালীন শিক্ষাসমাজের সভাপতি জে. ই. ডি. বেথুন সাহেব গৌরদাস বসাককে এই কাব্যখানির সম্বন্ধে এইরূপ মন্তব্য প্রকাশ করিয়াছিলেন,—

“ইংরেজী ভাষায় সবিশেষ পারদর্শিতার জ্ঞাত আপনাব বন্ধু সময়ে সময়ে নমুনাস্বরূপ এইরূপ কবিতা রচনা করিতে পারেন, কিন্তু ইংরেজী সাহিত্যের চর্চা ও অধ্যয়নের দ্বারা তিনি যে মার্জিত রুচি ও পাণ্ডিত্য লাভ করিয়াছেন, তাহা যদি নিজের মাতৃভাষার শ্রীবৃদ্ধিকল্পে নিয়োজিত করেন তাহা হইলে তাঁহার স্বদেশের মহত্বপকার সাধিত হইবে এবং তিনি স্বয়ং অক্ষয়-যশোলাভে সমর্থ হইবেন। বাংলাভাষার যেরূপ হীন অবস্থা তাহাতে একজন উচ্চাভিলাষী যুবক কবির পক্ষে ইহা অপেক্ষা উৎকৃষ্টতর কর্মক্ষেত্র আর হইতে পারে না।” এই উপদেশে মধুসূদনের চেতনা ফিরিয়া আসিল। যদিও স্বদেশবাসিগণের উপেক্ষায় তাঁহার হৃদয় ব্যথিত হইয়াছিল, তথাপি এই পত্রে তাঁহার পূর্ণ-উত্তম ফিরিয়া আসিল। কাব্যজগতে শ্রেষ্ঠ স্থান অধিকার করিয়া যশস্বী হইবেন ইহাই তাঁহার একমাত্র কামনা ছিল। কবিত্বের মাধুর্য্যে ও গৌরবে জগৎকে বিস্মিত করিবেন (‘‘astound the world with his fame’’) বাল্যাবধি ইহা তাঁহার আকাঙ্ক্ষা ছিল। সুতরাং স্বদেশ-বাসিগণের উপেক্ষা ও অনুরক্তা প্রত্যাখ্যান করিয়া তিনি পুনরায় পূর্ণ-উত্তমে বাংলা সাহিত্যসেবায় আত্মনিয়োগ করিলেন। অতঃপর মধুসূদন মাতৃভাষার সেবার দ্বারা খ্যাতি অর্জন করিবেন বলিয়া সঙ্কল্প করিলেন। যে ব্যক্তি এতদিন মাতৃভাষাকে অবজ্ঞার চক্ষে দেখিতেন, তিনি এক্ষণে প্রত্যাষ ছয়টা হইতে আরম্ভ করিয়া রাত্রি দশটা পর্য্যন্ত নানা ভাষা ও নানা গ্রন্থ অধ্যয়ন করিতে লাগিলেন। মাদ্রাজে বঙ্গভাষা চর্চা করিবার নানারূপ অসুবিধা ছিল। ঘটনাক্রমে মধুসূদন বঙ্গদেশে প্রত্যাগমন করিতে বাধ্য হইলেন। তাঁহার ভবিষ্যৎ জীবনের পথও প্রশস্ত হইল।

প্রবাসে অবস্থানকালে মধুসূদন তাঁহার কোনও আত্মীয়ের সংবাদ পাইতেন না—সংবাদ রাখিবার কোন প্রকার চেষ্টাও করিতেন না। মাদ্রাজ-প্রবাস-

কালে তাঁহার পিতামাতা উভয়েই পরলোক-গমন করেন, কিন্তু মধুসূদন পিতার মৃত্যুসংবাদ অবগত ছিলেন না। ইত্যবসরে তাঁহার আত্মীয়-স্বজনগণও মধুসূদন ইহলোক ত্যাগ করিয়াছেন এই ধারণায় তাঁহার যাবতীয় সম্পত্তি অধিকার করিয়া বসিলেন। এই অবস্থা জানিতে পারিয়া গৌরদাসবাবু মধুসূদনকে বঙ্গদেশে প্রত্যাগমন করিয়া পৈতৃক সম্পত্তি উদ্ধার করিবার জ্ঞা অনুরোধ করিলেন। মাদ্রাজে মধুসূদন আর্থিক অভাব ও পারিবারিক অশান্তি ভোগ করিতেছিলেন। অতএব তিনি স্বদেশে প্রত্যাগমন করিতে স্বীকৃত হইলেন। আট বৎসর পরে : ৮৫৬ খৃষ্টাব্দে জাম্বুয়ারী মাসে মধুসূদন বাংলায় ফিরিয়া আসিলেন।

মধুসূদন স্বদেশে ফিরিলেন সত্য, কিন্তু স্বদেশ তাঁহার নিকট বিদেশের ন্যায় প্রতীয়মান হইতে লাগিল। পিতামাতার অভাব তাঁহাকে অত্যন্ত পীড়িত করিতে লাগিল। কলিকাতায় অথবা নিজগ্রামে পৈতৃক বাসভবনে তাঁহার স্থান ছিল না। যে সকল আত্মীয়েরা তাঁহার সমস্ত পৈতৃক সম্পত্তি অধিকার করিয়া বসিয়াছিলেন, তাঁহারাও তাঁহার প্রতি বিমুখ। বাল্যবন্ধুগণের মধ্যে অনেকেই পূর্ববৎ সৌহার্দ দেখাইলেন না, নিঃসহায় ও নিরাশ্রয় মধুসূদন তখন কলিকাতার পুলিশ আদালতে একটি কেরাণীর পদ লইতে বাধ্য হইলেন।

মধুসূদনের জীবন ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাসে, বিশেষতঃ বাংলাদেশের ইতিহাসে একটি স্মরণীয় যুগে অতিবাহিত হইয়াছিল। তখন পাশ্চাত্য আদর্শের সহিত প্রাচ্য আদর্শের ঘোর সংঘর্ষে বাংলায় লিপুল আন্দোলনের সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে। এই আন্দোলনের মধ্যে এক নূতনতর বাংলাদেশ জন্মগ্রহণ করিতেছিল। সমাজ, ধর্ম, রাজনীতি সকলক্ষেত্রেই পুরাতনের সহিত নূতনের সংগ্রাম চলিতেছিল। এই সংগ্রামের ফলে এক নূতন যুগের অভ্যুদয় দেখা যাইতে লাগিল। মধুসূদনের ছাত্রজীবনে, মাতৃভাষার প্রতি ইংরেজী-শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালীর বিরূপ শ্রদ্ধার অভাব ছিল তাহা পূর্বেই বলা হইয়াছে। তিনি যখন মাদ্রাজ হইতে প্রত্যাগমন করিলেন তখন বাঙ্গালীর মাতৃভাষাকে অবজ্ঞার চক্ষে দেখিবার কোনও কারণ ছিল না। দ্বন্দ্বচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর ও অক্ষয়কুমার দত্তের ক্ষমতাশূণ্যে বাংলাভাষা রূপান্তরিত হইয়া নবজাগ্রত বাংলাদেশের নূতন মনোভাব ও নূতন শক্তি প্রকাশ করিতে কতদূর উপযোগী তাহা প্রমাণিত হইয়াছিল। তখনকার শিক্ষিত-সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে মাতৃভাষা এমন সম্মানের আসন অধিকার করিয়াছিল যে বিজাতীয়-ভাবগ্রস্ত মধুসূদনকেও তাহার পূজারীরূপে নিয়োজিত করিতে পারিয়াছিল।

মধুসূদনের প্রকৃত সাহিত্য-জীবন আরম্ভ হইল পাইকপাড়ার রাজা প্রতাপচন্দ্র, জৈশ্বরচন্দ্র ও মহারাজা যতীন্দ্রমোহন ঠাকুরের সহিত পরিচয়-ও ঘনিষ্ঠতা-সূত্রে। তখন বাংলাদেশে কতিপয় বিখ্যাতসাহী ধনী ব্যক্তির চেষ্টায় নাট্যকাভিনয়ের প্রচলন হইয়াছে। ১৮৫৮ সালে পাইকপাড়ার রাজাদিগের বেলগাছিয়া নাট্যশালায় রত্নাবলী নাটক অভিনীত হইবে বলিয়া নির্দ্ধারিত হইল। বঙ্গদেশের গভর্ণর হালাড়ে সাহেব, হাইকোর্টের বিচারপতিগণ ও অগ্ণাণ্য উচ্চপদস্থ ইংরেজ কর্মচারীগণকে নিমন্ত্রণ করা হইল। গৌরদাসবাবু বেলগাছিয়া নাট্যশালার একজন উদ্যোগী ব্যক্তি ছিলেন। তাঁহার প্রস্তাবে মধুসূদনের উপর রত্নাবলী নাটকের ইংরেজী অনুবাদ করিবার ভার গৃহীত হইল। রত্নাবলী নাটকের অভিনয় দেশীয় বিদেশীয় সকল দর্শককেই চমৎকৃত করিল। প্রধান সংবাদপত্র-সমূহে এই অভিনয়ের ভূয়সী প্রশংসা প্রকাশিত হইল। সেই সূত্রে রত্নাবলীর ইংরেজী অনুবাদক মধুসূদনের বিশুদ্ধ ইংরেজী রচনার খ্যাতিও চতুর্দিকে প্রচারিত হইল।

“রত্নাবলী” অভিনয়ের সহিত সংশ্লিষ্ট থাকাই মধুসূদনের বাংলাভাষায় রচনা আরম্ভ করিবার কারণ। “রত্নাবলী” নাটক দেখিয়া তাঁহার ধারণা হইল যে বাংলাভাষায় ইহা অপেক্ষা ভাল নাটক রচনা করিবার প্রয়োজন রহিয়াছে। মধুসূদন বাংলাভাষায় নাটক রচনা করিবেন ইহা তাঁহার শুভাকাঙ্ক্ষীগণের নিকট কল্পনাতীত মনে হইত। কিন্তু মধুসূদন যাহা সঙ্কল্প করিতেন তাহা না করিয়া ছাড়িতেন না। অতি অল্পদিনের মধ্যেই তিনি “শশ্মিষ্ঠা” নাটক রচনা করিয়া পাণ্ডুলিপি বন্ধুগণকে দেখাইলেন। যে বিদেশী ভাবাপন্ন ইংরেজী লেখক মধুসূদন কিয়দ্দিন পূর্বে সামান্য বাংলা শব্দেরও বানান ভুল করিতেন, তাঁহারই স্বহস্ত-রচিত এরূপ সুমধুর চিত্তাকর্ষক নাটক পাঠ করিয়া সকলেই চমৎকৃত ও বিস্ময়াগ্নিত হইল। পাইকপাড়ার রাজারা এবং মহারাজা যতীন্দ্রমোহন ঠাকুর বেলগাছিয়া নাট্যশালায় শশ্মিষ্ঠা অভিনয় করিবেন স্থির করিলেন এবং নিজ ব্যয়ে নাটকখানি মুদ্রিত করাইলেন। তৎকালীন ধনিব্যক্তিগণ প্রতিভার সমাদর করিতে ও প্রতিভাবান ব্যক্তিকে উৎসাহদান করিতে জানিতেন। পাইকপাড়ার রাজারা মধুসূদনকে ঋণভার হইতে মুক্ত করিলেন। মধুসূদন তখন বাংলাভাষায় খ্যাতি অর্জন করিয়াছিলেন, স্ততরাং ঋণমুক্ত হইয়া তিনি শাস্ত হৃদয়ে নব উত্তমে বাণীর সেবায় প্রবৃত্ত হইলেন। কিয়ৎকালের মধ্যেই তাঁহার দ্বিতীয় নাটক পদ্মাবতী সম্পূর্ণ হইল।

“পদ্মাবতী” নাটক বাংলা সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসে এক বিশেষ স্থান অধিকার করিয়াছে। এই নাটকের কিয়দংশ পণ্ডে লিখিত। এই পণ্ডগুলি অমিতাক্ষর (অমিত্রাক্ষর) ছন্দে রচিত। ইহার পূর্ববং বাংলাভাষায় এই ছন্দের প্রচলন ছিল না। পদ্মাবতী নাটকের পটভাংশে অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দ বাংলাভাষায় প্রথম প্রবর্তিত হইল। একদিন মধুসূদন মহারাজা যতীন্দ্রমোহনের সহিত কথোপকথনের মধ্যে বলেন যে, অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দের প্রবর্তন না হইলে বাংলাভাষার উন্নতি হইতে পারে না। মহারাজা তদুত্তরে বলিলেন যে, বাংলাভাষার গঠন যেরূপ তাহাতে অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দের ব্যবহার সম্ভব নহে। মধুসূদন উত্তর দিলেন যে তিনি স্বয়ং অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দে গ্রন্থ রচনা করিয়া দেখাইয়া দিবেন যে, এই ছন্দের প্রবর্তন সংস্কৃত-ভাষা-জাত বাংলাভাষায় অসম্ভব নহে। “পদ্মাবতী” নাটক সমাপ্ত হইবার পর মহারাজা যতীন্দ্রমোহনকে পরাজয় স্বীকার করিতে হইল। কিয়দিন পরে মধুসূদন অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দে তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব কাব্য রচনা করিয়া মহারাজাকে অধিকতর বিস্মিত করিলেন। তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব কাব্যের প্রথম ও দ্বিতীয় সর্গ বিবিধার্থসংগ্রহ নামক পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত হয়। ১৮৬০ খৃষ্টাব্দে কাব্যখানি সম্পূর্ণ হইলে পর মহারাজা যতীন্দ্রমোহন স্বীয় ব্যয়ে উহা মুদ্রিত করিলেন। তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব কাব্য বঙ্গসাহিত্যে এক নূতন যুগ আনিয়া দিল। মধুসূদনের নিকট হইতে ইহার পাণ্ডুলিপি উপহার পাইয়া মহারাজা লিখিয়াছিলেন, “I will preserve it with the greatest care in my library, as a monument that marks a grand epoch in our literature when Bengali poetry first broke thro’ the fetters of rhyme and soared exultingly into the lofty region of sublimity which is her genuine province.”

কিন্তু সকলেই এরূপ দূরদর্শী ছিলেন না। অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দে কাব্য রচনার পর বহু সাহিত্যিক ও বিদ্বান ব্যক্তির বিক্রম ও শ্লেষ মধুসূদনকে সহ্য করিতে হইয়াছিল।

১৮৫৮ হইতে ১৮৬০ খৃষ্টাব্দ—এই তিন বৎসর মধুসূদনের জীবনের সর্বোৎকৃষ্ট সময়। এই অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে মধুসূদন প্রথম নাটক রচনা করিলেন, অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দ প্রবর্তন করিয়া বাংলা সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসে অমর কীর্তি স্থাপন করিলেন, এই সময়েই আবার তিনি একেই কি বলে সভ্যতা ও বুড়ো শালিকের ঘাড়ে রৌ নামক দুইটি প্রহসন রচনা করিয়া বঙ্গভাষায় প্রথম প্রহসনের সৃষ্টি করিলেন।

পূর্বেই বলা হইয়াছে বঙ্গদেশে তখন প্রাচ্য ও পাশ্চাত্যের সংঘর্ষে বিপুল আন্দোলনের সৃষ্টি হইয়াছিল। পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার তীব্র আলোকে অন্ধ হইয়া ইয়ং বেঙ্গল দল হিন্দুসভ্যতা ও শাস্ত্র সংকীর্ণতাপূর্ণ বলিয়া প্রচার করিতে লাগিলেন এবং সমাজ-সংস্কারের নামে নানারূপ স্বৈচ্ছাচার ও উচ্ছৃঙ্খলতায় প্রবৃত্ত হইলেন। মধুসূদন স্বয়ং এই দলভুক্ত ছিলেন। তথাপি তিনি ইহাদের অত্যধিক অত্যাচার লক্ষ্য করিয়া একেই কি বলে সভ্যতা নামক প্রহসনটি রচনা করিলেন।

যেমন ইয়ং বেঙ্গল দলের অতিরিক্ত অত্যাচারে সমাজ প্রদীড়িত হইয়াছিল, সেইরূপ প্রাচীনপন্থীদের হিন্দুক্রিয়াকর্মের অন্ধ অনুষ্ঠানে ও অত্যধিক গোঁড়ামিতে সমাজ আরও নিম্নস্তরে চলিয়া যাইতেছিল। বুড়ো শালিকের ঘাড়ে রৌ। এই শ্রেণীর ব্যক্তিগণকে পরিহাস করিয়া লিখিত। বাংলার সামাজিক ইতিহাসের এই সন্ধিস্থলের চিত্র মধুসূদন যে নিপুণতার সহিত অঙ্কিত করিয়াছেন তাহা অতুলনীয়।

একেই কি বলে সভ্যতা ও তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব কাব্য মধুসূদন একই সঙ্গে রচনা করেন। ইহা তাঁহার আশ্চর্য্য প্রতিভার পরিচয়। একসঙ্গে একই ব্যক্তি হান্তোদ্দীপক প্রহসন ও তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভবের ন্যায় গাঙ্গীর্ষ্যপূর্ণ কাব্য রচনা করিয়া বঙ্গুগণকে বিস্মিত করিলেন। আবার তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব কাব্য প্রকাশিত হইবার কয়েককাল পরেই মেঘনাদবধ ও ব্রজাঙ্গনা একই সঙ্গে রচনা করিতে আরম্ভ করিলেন।

১৮৬২ খৃষ্টাব্দে মেঘনাদবধ কাব্যের প্রথমাংশ গ্রন্থাকারে প্রকাশিত হইল। এতাবৎকাল মধুসূদনের বঙ্গুগণই কেবল তাঁহাকে উৎসাহিত ও সম্মানিত করিয়া আসিতেছিলেন। মেঘনাদবধ কাব্য প্রকাশের পর বঙ্গদেশে মধুসূদনের গুণামুরাগী ব্যক্তির অভাব থাকিল না। বিজ্ঞোৎসাহিনী সভা হইতে মধুসূদনকে অভিনন্দনপত্র প্রদান করিয়া কলিকাতার শিক্ষিত-সমাজ নিজেকে ও কবিকে ধন্য করিলেন। সংবাদপত্রে ও সভাস্থলে মেঘনাদ বধ কাব্যের সমালোচনা চলিতে লাগিল। অতি অল্পকালের মধ্যেই ইহার দ্বিতীয় সংস্করণ মুদ্রণের আবশ্যক হইল। বাল্যকাল হইতেই মধুসূদন সর্বজনসমাদৃত কবি হইবার যে আশা পোষণ করিয়া, বহু বাধাবিঘ্নের মধ্যেও অসম্ভব পরিশ্রম করিতেছিলেন তাহা সফল হইল। তিনি মেঘনাদ বধ ও ব্রজাঙ্গনা কাব্যদ্বয় সমাপ্ত করিয়া কৃষ্ণকুমারী নাটক রচনা করিলেন।

মধুসূদনের এক্ষণে অর্থের কোনও অভাব ছিল না। তাঁহার অর্থাগম ও যশ উত্তরোত্তর বৃদ্ধি পাইতে লাগিল। কিন্তু আত্মসংযমের অভাবে তাঁহার পারিবারিক জীবনে কোনও সুখ ছিল না। “তত্ত্ববোধিনী” পত্রিকায় ১৮৬১ খৃষ্টাব্দে প্রকাশিত “আত্মবিলাপ” নামক কবিতা পাঠ করিলে তাঁহার প্রকৃত মানসিক অবস্থার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। শুধু বাগদেবীর আরাধনার দ্বারা ই তিনি এই মানসিক যন্ত্রণা হইতে শাস্তি লাভ করিতেন।

১৮৫৮ হইতে ১৮৬২—এই পাঁচ বৎসর কাল মধুসূদন অদ্ভুত রচনা-শক্তির পরিচয় দিয়াছেন। “শশিষ্ঠা” রচনার সময়ে তিনি বাংলা সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে সম্পূর্ণ অপরিচিত। তাঁহার দ্বারা বঙ্গভাষায় কোনওরূপ রচনা লিখিত হওয়া অসম্ভব বলিয়াই তখন জনসাধারণের ধারণা ছিল। সহসা তাঁহার প্রদীপ্ত প্রতিভার বিকাশ হইতে লাগিল। ক্রমে ক্রমে গুপ্ত প্রসবগজাত নদীর ন্যায় অমিত্রাক্ষর ছন্দ, প্রহসন, মহাকাব্য, খণ্ডকাব্য, নাটক প্রভৃতি তাঁহার লেখনী হইতে ক্রমবদ্ধিত প্রবাহে নির্গত হইতে লাগিল। মধুসূদনের এই উৎকৃষ্ট সময়ের শেষ রচনা “বীরভদ্রনা” কাব্য। এই কাব্যে তাঁহার প্রতিভা উজ্জ্বলতম সৌম্য পৌছিল। ১৮৬২ খৃষ্টাব্দের জুন মাসে বঙ্গসাহিত্যের পক্ষে একটি দুর্ঘটনা ঘটিল। মধুসূদন বঙ্গদেশ ত্যাগ করিয়া ইয়োরোপ যাত্রা করিলেন। ইহার পর মধুসূদন বঙ্গসাহিত্যে যাহা দান করিয়াছেন তাহার মধ্যে “চতুর্দশপদী কবিতা”গুলি উল্লেখযোগ্য।

যৌবনকাল হইতেই মধুসূদনের ইংলণ্ডে যাইবার প্রবল ইচ্ছা ছিল। তিনি মনে করিলেন ব্যারিষ্টার হইতে পারিলে অর্থকষ্ট দূর হইবে। তাঁহার আয় এই সময়ে নিতান্ত মন্দ ছিল না। পুলিশ আদালতে চাকুরী করিয়া যে বেতন পাইতেন তাহার উপরই শুধু নির্ভর করিতে হইত না। পুস্তক-বিক্রয় হইতেও তাঁহার কিছু অর্থাগম হইত। “হিন্দু পেট্রিয়ার্ট” প্রমুখ কোনও কোনও সাময়িক পত্রিকাতে লিখিয়াও তিনি কিছু উপার্জন করিতেন। তদুপরি তিনি পিতৃব্যপুত্রগণের সহিত মোকদ্দমা করিয়া তাঁহার পৈতৃক সম্পত্তি উদ্ধার করিয়াছিলেন। ইহা সত্ত্বেও অমিতব্যয়ী মধুসূদনের অর্থভাব দূর হইত না। নিজের অভ্যাস সংশোধন করিয়া আয় অনুযায়ী ব্যয় করিতে শিক্ষা করিলে তাঁহার জীবন শাস্তিপূর্ণ হইত। কিন্তু তিনি কখনও তাহা করেন নাই। ইংলণ্ড-গমনের ন্যায় ব্যয়বহুল সঙ্কল্পে উপনীত হইতে তিনি একটুও বিধা বোধ করিলেন না। তাঁহার সমুদয় পৈতৃক সম্পত্তি পণ্ডনি দিয়া তিনি

ইংলণ্ডে যাওয়া স্থির করিলেন। পাশ্চাত্য ভাষাসমূহে অভিজ্ঞতা লাভ করিবার স্পৃহা মধুসূদনের হৃদয়ে শৈশব হইতেই প্রদীপ্ত ছিল, কিন্তু মাতৃভাষার উন্নতিকল্পে মধুসূদন তাহা বিস্মৃত হইয়াছিলেন। বঙ্গভাষার একনিষ্ঠ সাধক ইংলণ্ড-গমনের পূর্বসময়ে বঙ্গমাতার উদ্দেশ্যে যে আবেগময়ী কবিতা লিখিয়াছিলেন তাহা তাঁহার অন্তরের অকৃত্রিম অনুরাগের পরিচয় দেয়।

“রেখে মা দাসের মনে, এ মিনতি করি পদে
সাধিতে মনের সাধ, ঘটে যদি পরমাদ
মধুহীন করো না গো তব মনঃ-কোকনদে।”

—(বঙ্গভূমির প্রতি)

১৮৬০ খৃষ্টাব্দের ৯ই জুন মধুসূদন “ক্যাণ্ডিয়া” নামক জাহাজে ইংলণ্ড-যাত্রা করিলেন। এতকাল পরে হোমার, মিল্টন ও শেক্সপীয়ারের লীলাক্ষেত্র দেখিবার প্রবল বাসনা পূর্ণ হইতে চলিল। ক্রমশঃ তিনি অগ্রসর হইতে লাগিলেন। মাদ্রাজ তাঁহার অপরিচিত ছিল না। সিংহল দর্শন করিয়া কবির চিত্ত বৈদেহীর দুঃখস্মৃতিতে আলোড়িত হইয়া উঠিল। সমস্ত রাত্রি তিনি বিনিদ্র হইয়া কাটাইয়াছিলেন। এই করুণ স্মৃতি বহুদিন তাঁহার মনে জাগরুক ছিল। স্বদূর ফরাসীদেশে বসিয়া তিনি ইহার উদ্দেশ্যে লিখিয়াছিলেন,

“সাধিনু নিদ্রায় বৃথা সুন্দর সিংহলে।
স্মৃতি, পিতা বাম্বাকির বৃদ্ধ রূপ ধরি,
বসিলা শিয়রে মোর; হাতে বীণা করি,
গাইলা সে মহাগীত, যাহে হিয়া জ্বলে,
যাহে আজু আঁখি হ’তে অশ্রুবিন্দু গলে,
কে সে ভূভারতে, বৈদেহি সুন্দরি,
নাহি আর্দ্রে যার মন তব কথা স্মরি,
নিত্য-কান্তি কমলিনী তুমি ভক্তিজলে!”

—(রামায়ণ)

১৮৬২ খৃষ্টাব্দের জুলাই মাসের শেষে মধুসূদন ইংলণ্ডে পৌঁছিলেন। ইংলণ্ডে উপস্থিত হইয়া তিনি Gray’s Inn এ ভর্তি হইলেন। এইখানে তিনি

ব্যবহারশাস্ত্র অধ্যয়ন করিতে লাগিলেন। ইংলণ্ডে কয়েক মাস অতিবাহিত হইবার পর তিনি অর্থাভাবে নানাবিধ দুঃখকষ্ট ভোগ করিতে লাগিলেন। জীবনে কোথাও মধুসূদন নিরবচ্ছিন্ন সুখ পান নাই। এইখানেও ইহার ব্যতিক্রম হইল না। তাঁহার তালুকের পত্তনিদারগণ ব্যবস্থামত তাঁহাকে অর্থ প্রেরণ করিলেন না, সুতরাং ইংলণ্ডে মধুসূদন ও ভারতে তাঁহার পত্নী হেনরিয়েটা মহা বিপদে পড়িলেন। স্বামীর অনুপস্থিতিতে হেনরিয়েটা কোনও প্রকার অর্থের ব্যবস্থা করিতে না পারিয়া ইংলণ্ডে স্বামীর নিকট যাওয়াই স্থির করিলেন। ১৮৬৩ খৃষ্টাব্দের ২রা মে তিনি পুত্রকণ্ঠাসহ ইংলণ্ড যাত্রা করিলেন। এই অপ্ৰত্যাশিত ব্যয়বৃদ্ধিতে মধুসূদন অর্থসংগ্রহের উপায় খুঁজিতে লাগিলেন। বিদেশে অর্থের সংস্থান করিতে না পারিয়া তিনি পত্নীর গহনা, আসবাবপত্র সমুদয় গচ্ছিত রাখিয়া ঋণ গ্রহণ করিলেন ও তদ্বারা গ্রাসাচ্ছাদনের ব্যবস্থা করিলেন। পত্নীর স্বাস্থ্যের নিমিত্ত তিনি অধ্যয়নের অবকাশকালে ফ্রান্সের অন্তর্গত ভার্সাই নগরে বাস করিতে গিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু অর্থাভাবের জ্ঞাত্য তিনি আর ইংলণ্ডে ফিরিয়া যাইতে পারিলেন না। এইখানেই দুঃখ-দারিদ্র্যের মধ্যে দিন অতিবাহিত করিতে লাগিলেন। কোনও কোনও দিন তিনি পরিবারসহ অনশনে থাকিতেন। আত্মাভিমানী মধুসূদন একবার স্বদেশ-বাসীর সহানুভূতি না পাইয়া স্তূদুর মাদ্রাজ গমন করিয়াছিলেন। কোনও প্রকার বাধাবিপত্তি তাঁহাকে গন্তব্যপথ হইতে বিচলিত করিতে পারে নাই। বঙ্গদেশ হইতে বহু সহস্র মাইল দূর যুরোপে যখন আবার অর্থকষ্টে পড়িলেন তখন বঙ্গদেশের কবিশিরোমণি মধুসূদন পরিচিত দেশবাসিগণের নিকট সাহায্য ভিক্ষা করিতে কুণ্ঠিত হইলেন। কিন্তু অনশনের দুর্বিষহ যন্ত্রণায় তাঁহাকে আত্মাভিমান ও মর্যাদাজ্ঞান ভুলিতে হইল। তিনি দয়ার সাগর বিজ্ঞাসাগর মহাশয়ের শরণাপন্ন হইলেন। বিজ্ঞাসাগর মহাশয় অর্থপ্রেরণ করিয়া তাঁহার সাময়িক অর্থাভাব দূর করিলেন। এইরূপ অর্থাভাবজনিত নানাপ্রকার অন্তঃকণ্ঠ ভোগ করিয়া মধুসূদন স্বীয় সঙ্কল্পে সিদ্ধিলাভ করিয়া পাঁচ বৎসর পরে স্বদেশে প্রত্যাগমন করিলেন।

যদিও আইন-শিক্ষার্থ মধুসূদন ইংলণ্ডে গমন করিয়াছিলেন, যুরোপীয় ভাষাসমূহ শিক্ষালাভ করাও তাঁহার অন্ততম উদ্দেশ্য ছিল। তিনি অবকাশ-কালে ইংরেজী, ফরাসী ও ইতালীয় ভাষা চর্চা করিতে লাগিলেন। ফ্রান্সে অবস্থান-কালে দাস্তের মৃত্যুর ত্রিশত বাৎসরিক উৎসব অনুষ্ঠিত হইয়াছিল।

মধুসূদন এই উপলক্ষ্যে একটি কবিতা রচনা করিয়া ফরাসী ও ইতালীয় ভাষায় অনুবাদ করিয়া ইতালীয় রাজা ভিক্টর ইমানিউয়েলকে উপহার দিয়াছিলেন। ইমানিউয়েল উহা পাঠ করিয়া মন্তব্য প্রকাশ করিয়াছিলেন - “আপনার কবিতা গ্রন্থিরূপে প্রাচ্য ও প্রতীচ্যকে সংযুক্ত করিবে।” পাশ্চাত্য সুধীসমাজকে চমৎকৃত করিবার উদ্দেশ্যে মধুসূদন ভারতবর্ষের সনাতন আদর্শ সীতা-চরিত্র অবলম্বনে “Queen Seeta” নামক একখানি ইংরেজী কাব্য রচনা করিয়াছিলেন। তিনি প্রগাঢ় অধ্যবসায়ের ফলে বাংলা ভাষায় “সুভদ্রা-হরণ” ও “দ্রৌপদীর স্বয়ম্বর” প্রভৃতি গ্রন্থ লিখিয়াছিলেন। ভার্সাই নগরে অবস্থান-কালে তিনি ইতালীয় কবি “পেত্রার্কের”র অনুকরণে বাংলায় প্রথম চতুর্দশপদী কবিতা রচনা করেন। বঙ্গসাহিত্যে অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দের ন্যায় ইহাও মধুসূদনের আর একটি নূতন দান। এই কবিতাগুলির অধিকাংশই ভারতীয় কাব্য ও পুরাণাদি অবলম্বনে লিখিত। শুধু পাঁচটি কবিতা যুরোপীয় বিষয় লইয়া রচিত। তন্মধ্যে চারিটি কবিতা যুরোপের প্রখ্যাত কবিগণের উদ্দেশ্যে লিখিত হইয়াছে। একটি কবিতা ভার্সাই নগরের উজ্জান ও রাজপুরীর সম্বন্ধে রচিত। চতুর্দশপদী কবিতাবলীর মধ্য দিয়া কবি মধুসূদনের দেশাত্মবোধ, হিন্দুধর্মের প্রতি গভীর শ্রদ্ধা ও তাঁহার আত্মকৃত ভ্রান্তির জগৎ তীব্র অনুশোচনা—সমস্তই ফুটিয়া উঠিয়াছে। *

* এই কবিতাবলী-রচনার সঙ্গেই মধুসূদনের সাহিত্যিক জীবনের পরিসমাপ্তি। বঙ্গভাষার নিকট শেষ বিদায় গ্রহণ করিয়া ক্লাস্তকায় মধুসূদন তাঁহার কবিজীবনের অবসান করিয়াছেন—

“বিসর্জিব আজি, মাগো, বিন্দুতির জলে

(হৃদয়-মণ্ডপ, হার, অঙ্গকার করি)

ও প্রতিমা। নিষাইল, দেখ হোমানলে

মনঃকুণ্ডে অশ্রুধারা মনোহুখে বরি”

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* * “নারিন্দ্র, মা, চিনিতে তোমাতে

শৈশবে, অবোধ আমি। ডাকিলা যৌবনে ;

(যদিও অথম পুত্র, মা কি ভুলে তারে ?)

এবে ইন্দ্র প্রস্থ ছাড়ি যাই দূর-বনে।

এই বর, হে বরদে, মাগি শেষবারে—

জ্যোতির্ময় কর বঙ্গ ভারত-রতনে।”

মধুসূদনের যুরোপ প্রবাসকালও শেষ হইল। ব্যারিস্টারী পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হইয়া ১৮৬৭ খৃষ্টাব্দে মার্চ মাসে তিনি স্বদেশে ফিরিয়া আসিলেন। বিজ্ঞাসাগর মহাশয় পূর্ব হইতেই তাঁহার বাসের নিমিত্ত লাউডন ষ্ট্রীটে একটি বাড়ি সজ্জিত করিয়া রাখিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু মধুসূদন উক্ত বাড়ীতে না উঠিয়া স্পেনসেস্ নামক একটি ইংরেজী হোটেলে উঠিলেন। ইহাতে বিজ্ঞাসাগর মহাশয় একটু ক্ষুব্ধ হইলেন। যাহা হউক, মধুসূদন বহু প্রতিবন্ধক সত্ত্বেও বিজ্ঞাসাগর মহাশয় এবং অগাধ শুভাকাঙ্ক্ষীদের একান্ত চেষ্টাতে হাইকোর্টে ব্যারিস্টারী করিবার জগ প্রবেশাধিকার পাইলেন। কিন্তু ব্যবহার-শাস্ত্রকে মধুসূদন অন্তরের সঙ্গে গ্রহণ করিতে পারেন নাই সাংসারিক দুঃখ-দারিদ্র্যে পীড়িত হইয়াই তিনি অর্থোপার্জিত জগ এই ব্যবসায় আরম্ভ করিয়াছিলেন। তিনি আকস্মিক কবি, তাঁহার মন ভাবের ও কল্পনার রাজ্যে বিচরণ করিত, সুতরাং আইন-ব্যবসায়ে যে সকল গুণ থাকা প্রয়োজন তাঁহার চরিত্রে ক্রমশঃ তাহাদের অভাব পরিলক্ষিত হইতে লাগিল। তিনি ব্যবহার-শাস্ত্রের জটিল কূটতর্ক আয়ত্ত করিতে পারিতেন না, তত্পরি বিচারকদিগের মনস্তত্ত্ব-সাধনের কৌশলও তাঁহার জানা ছিল না। হাইকোর্টের প্রসিদ্ধ বিচারক স্তার লুই জ্যাকসনের সহিত প্রায়ই তাঁহার বাদানুবাদ ঘটিত। তাঁহার প্রচণ্ড প্রতাপে সমগ্র বিচারালয় সম্মুগ্ধ ও শব্দিত, তাঁহাকে মধুসূদন গ্রাহ্যই করিতেন না। গৌরদাসবাবু মধুসূদনকে বিচারপতির সঙ্গে এরূপ তর্ক করিতে নিষেধ করায় তিনি বলিয়াছিলেন, “Michael can never brook anybody’s bullying.” এতদ্ব্যতীত তাঁহার আইন-ব্যবসায়ের প্রধান অন্তরায় ছিল ভয় কণ্ঠস্বর। সুতরাং তিনি সর্বদাই অতি উচ্চকণ্ঠে বক্তৃতা দিতেন। একদিন বিচারালয়ে তাঁহাকে উচ্চকণ্ঠে বক্তৃতা করিতে শুনিয়া জ্যাকসন বলেন, “The Court orders you to plead slowly, the Court has ears.” মধুসূদন উত্তর করিলেন, “But pretty too long, my Lord.” তিনি সর্বদাই এইরূপ সপ্রতিভ ছিলেন। নানা কারণে তাঁহার ব্যবসায়ে আশানুরূপ প্রসার-প্রতিপত্তি হইল না। ব্যবসায়ের প্রারম্ভে মধুসূদনের উন্নতি দেখা গিয়াছিল। তিনি একজন প্রসিদ্ধ লেখক ও সুপণ্ডিত বলিয়া সকলেরই শ্রদ্ধাভাজন ছিলেন। পরিচিত সকল ব্যক্তিরই তাঁহার ব্যবসায়ের সুবিধা করিয়া দিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার মাসিক দেড় হাজার টাকা পর্য্যন্ত আয় হইয়াছিল। কিন্তু উচ্ছৃঙ্খল মধুসূদন আয় অনুযায়ী ব্যয় করিতেন না। সুতরাং অধিক ব্যয়ের জন্য তিনি ঋণগ্রস্ত হইয়া পড়িলেন। ক্রমশঃ তাঁহার প্রতিপত্তির

ভ্রাস দেখা যাইতে লাগিল। উপায়ান্তর না দেখিয়া তিনি প্রিভি কাউন্সিলের অন্ততম অনুবাদকের পদ গ্রহণ করিলেন।

যুরোপ হইতে প্রত্যাগমনের পর মধুসূদন বিশেষভাবে সাহিত্য-সাধনা করিতে পারেন নাই। সাংসারিক ব্যয়ের জন্ত তাঁহার মন সর্বদাই উৎকণ্ঠিত রহিত। কিন্তু যিনি আশৈশব কবি—সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে হইতে একেবারে অবসর গ্রহণ করা তাঁহার পক্ষে সম্ভব নহে। অবসর-কালে চিত্তবিনোদনের জন্ত তিনি দুই একখানি কাব্য রচনা করিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু যুরোপ-প্রবাসকালে লিখিত কাব্যগুলির গায় তাঁহার এই কাব্যগুলিও অসম্পূর্ণ হইয়া রহিল। তাঁহার শেষজীবনের লিখিত কাব্যগুলির মধ্যে “নীতিমূলক কবিতামালা” “হেক্টর বধ” ও “মায়াকানন” বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখযোগ্য। তাঁহার নীতিমূলক কবিতাগুলি Aesop's Fables এর অনুকরণে লিখিত। অর্থাগমের জন্ত তিনি ইহা বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রগণের উপযোগী করিয়াই লিখিয়াছিলেন এবং ইহা বিদ্যালয়ের পাঠ্য হইয়াছিল। “রসাল ও স্বর্ণলতিকা”, “মেঘ ও চাতক”, “সূর্য ও মৈনাক” এই কয়টি কবিতা জনসাধারণের নিকট সুপরিচিত। মধুসূদন “হেক্টর বধ” লিখিয়াছেন—টয়ের রাজকুমার হেক্টরের মৃত্যু-বিষয় অবলম্বনে। অতিরিক্ত ভাষা-বিবাস এবং ততোধিক অলঙ্কারযুক্ত শব্দ-প্রয়োগের জন্ত গ্রন্থখানি স্থানে স্থানে দুর্বোধ্য হইয়াছে। সুতরাং ইহা জনসাধারণের নিকট প্রসিদ্ধি লাভ করিতে পারে নাই। হোমারের অনুকরণে লিখিত বলিয়া ইহা ওজো-গুণ-সমৃদ্ধ। এই গ্রন্থখানি তাঁহাকে খুব বেশী আনন্দ দেয় নাই। পাশ্চাত্য-ভাবানুপ্রাণিত বলিয়া পাঠকগণের নিকটও ইহা সমাদৃত হইল না। এতদ্ব্যতীত ইহার ভাষায় নানাপ্রকার অদ্ভুত প্রয়োগ লক্ষিত হয়। মধুসূদন কবি। তিনি গল্প রচনায় সিদ্ধহস্ত ছিলেন না। “হেক্টর বধ” কাব্যের ভাষা পণ্ডের উপযোগী। এই কাব্যে নামধাতুর প্রয়োগ করা হইয়াছে (“পুনরায় রচিয়া দিতে পারিলাম না”, “সম্বোধিয়া কহিলেন”, “আক্রমিয়া”, “যুদ্ধিতেছিলেন” ইত্যাদি)। ইহা ছাড়া অনুপ্রাসের প্রাচুর্য, কঠিন সমাসবন্ধ পদের প্রয়োগ এবং উপমার বাহুল্যের জন্ত “হেক্টর বধ” জনপ্রিয় হইতে পারে নাই। যে প্রাঞ্জলতা গল্পের প্রধান গুণ তাহা এখানে পাওয়া যায় না। ইহা সত্ত্বেও “হেক্টর বধ” এর দুই একটি গুণের কথা উল্লেখ করিতে হইবে। প্রথমতঃ মাইকেলের পূর্ববর্তী যুগের পণ্ডিতী রচনায় দুর্বোধ্য শব্দ ও দীর্ঘ-সমাস-বিশিষ্ট পদের বহুল প্রয়োগ দেখা যায়। সেই তলনায় “হেক্টর বধ” এর গল্প অপেক্ষাকৃত সরল। এষ্ট দিক দিয়া বিচার

করিতে গেলে গ্লান্কারময়ী ওজস্বিনী ভাষার বিবর্তনের ইতিহাসে “হেক্টর বধ”এর একটি বিশিষ্ট স্থান আছে। দ্বিতীয়তঃ, “হেক্টর বধ” বাংলা গল্পে বীররস-প্রবর্তনের জ্ঞাত স্মরণীয় হইয়া থাকিবে। এই কাব্যের বিষয় বিদেশীয় পুরাণ। মধুসূদন হোমারের অনুকরণে বিশালতা ও বীরত্বব্যঞ্জক ভাবের সমাবেশ করিয়াছেন। এই কাব্য মধুসূদনের শ্রেষ্ঠ কাব্য না হইলেও উপেক্ষণীয় নহে।

এই গ্রন্থখানির সঙ্গে মধুসূদনের সাহিত্যিক জীবনের প্রায় অবসান হইল। য়ুরোপ হইতে প্রত্যাগমনের পর মধুসূদন মাত্র ছয় বৎসর কাল জীবিত ছিলেন। তন্মধ্যে পাঁচ বৎসর কাল তিনি আইন ব্যবসা করিয়াছিলেন। ভবিষ্যতে পদমর্যাদা ও উন্নতির জ্ঞাত তিনি আয় অপেক্ষা ব্যয় বেশী করিতেন, ফলে সাংসারিক অসচ্ছলতা দিন দিন বৃদ্ধি পাইতে লাগিল। অতি অল্পদিনের মধ্যে মধুসূদন ঋণে জড়িত হইয়া পড়িলেন। অর্থান্ধার দেখিলেই তিনি ঋণ করিতেন, কিন্তু ঋণ-পরিশোধের দিকে আদৌ লক্ষ্য রাখিতেন না। সুতরাং দেশবাসিগণ ক্রমশঃ তাঁহাকে প্রবঞ্চক, শঠ ইত্যাদি আখ্যা দিতে আরম্ভ করিলেন। বিবেকবুদ্ধি, বিবেচনা, কষ্টব্য কিছুই তখন তাঁহার ছিল না। মানসিক অশান্তি ও উদ্বেগে তিনি দিন অতিবাহিত করিতে লাগিলেন। অবশেষে দুষ্চিন্তা-দুর্ভাবনায় অস্থির হইয়া কবি মধুসূদন অতিরিক্ত মাত্রায় সুরাপান আরম্ভ করিলেন। কখনও কখনও তিনি সাহিত্য-সাধনায় নিজেকে ডুবাইয়া রাখিতেন। ইহাতে তিনি শান্তি পাইতেন। এই সময়ে লিখিত কবিতাবলী হইতে তাঁহার মানসিক যন্ত্রণার কিছু কিছু আভাস পাওয়া যায়। মধুসূদন সম্পদে-বিপদে, সুখে-দুঃখে সকল প্রকার অবস্থাতেই বাগ্দেরী আরাধনায় শান্তি পাইতেন। বাগ্দেরী গায় কমলার অনুগ্রহভাজন হইবেন—ইহাও তাঁহার আকাঙ্ক্ষা ছিল। কিন্তু দুর্ভাগ্যের বিষয় জীবনে কোনদিনই তাঁহার সেই দুর্লভ আশা পূর্ণ হয় নাই। তিনি আক্ষেপ করিয়াছেন—

“ডুবাইছ, দেখিতেছি ক্রমে এই তরী,
অদয়ে! অতল দুঃখ সাগরের জলে
ডুবিবু, কি যশ তব হবে বঙ্গস্থলে।”

মধুসূদন আত্মবিস্মৃতির জ্ঞাত উগ্রতর মদ পান করিয়া ধীরে ধীরে মৃত্যুর দিকে অগ্রসর হইতে লাগিলেন। য়ুরোপে অবস্থান-কালে মনোমোহন ঘোষ মহাশয়ের সহিত মধুসূদনের সৌহার্দ্য জন্মিয়াছিল। তিনি বন্ধুকে বহুবার এই

প্রকার উগ্র মদ পান করিতে নিষেধ করিলেন, কিন্তু বাল্যাবধি মধুসূদন যাহা করিতে মনস্থ করিতেন কখনও তাহা হইতে বিচ্যুত হইতেন না। এই ক্ষেত্রেও তিনি অভ্যাস পরিত্যাগ করিলেন না, বন্ধুর অনুরোধ উপেক্ষা করিয়া আরও অধিক পরিমাণে সুরা পান করিতে লাগিলেন। অতি অল্পদিনের মধ্যে তিনি নানা প্রকার ব্যাধিতে আক্রান্ত হইয়া পড়িলেন। অর্থাভাবের জন্য মধুসূদন মানভূমের অন্তর্গত পঞ্চকোটের রাজার উপদেষ্টার (Legal Adviser) পদ গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু তথায় তিনি বেশী দিন কাজ করিতে পারিলেন না। ১৮৭২ খৃষ্টাব্দে পদত্যাগ-পত্র দিয়া তিনি কলিকাতায় প্রত্যাগমন করিলেন। কলিকাতায় প্রত্যাগমনের পর তিনি কঠিন রোগে একেবারে শয্যাশায়ী হইলেন। ইতিমধ্যে তাঁহার পত্নী হেনরিয়েটাও রোগে আক্রান্ত হইলেন। রোগের চিকিৎসা বা শিশুগণের গ্রাসাচ্ছাদনের জন্য তাঁহাকে কেহ আর ঋণ দান করিলেন না। উপায়ান্তর না দেখিয়া অবশেষে মধুসূদন বহুমূল্য আসবাবপত্র, গহনা, সৌখীন দ্রব্য ইত্যাদি বিক্রয় করিলেন। ক্রমশঃ তাহাও নিঃশেষ হইয়া গেল। শিশুগণের দিন অনাহারে কাটিতে লাগিল। মধুসূদন সন্তানের অনশনক্লিষ্ট মুখ দেখিয়া অশ্রু সংবরণ করিতে পারিতেন না। রোগ-শয্যায় শুইয়া তিনি অহর্নিশি মৃত্যু কামনা করিতে লাগিলেন। এই সময়ে অর্থের আশায় তিনি রঙ্গশালার জন্য “মায়াকানন” নামক একখানি গীতি-নাট্যের কিয়দংশ রচনা করিলেন। এই নাটকখানিতে মধুসূদনের স্বীয় বিষাদময় জীবনের প্রতিবিম্ব পতিত হইয়াছে। রোগের অসহ্য যন্ত্রণায় তিনি ইহা সম্পূর্ণ করিতে পারেন নাই। রঙ্গভূমির অধ্যক্ষগণ পরে স্বেচ্ছানুযায়ী রূপ দিয়া গ্রন্থখানি সম্পূর্ণ করেন। তিনি “বিষ না ধনুগুণ” নামক আর একখানি নাটক-রচনার প্রচেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু পূর্বখানির মতই ইহাও অসমাপ্ত ছিল। মধুসূদনের সাহিত্য-প্রতিভার প্রথম স্ফুর্তি নাটক-রচনায়, আবার নাটক-রচনার দ্বারাই তাঁহার সাহিত্যিক জীবনের অবসান হইল।

পিড়িত অবস্থায় মধুসূদন কিছুদিন উত্তরপাড়ার প্রসিদ্ধ জমিদার স্বর্গীয় জয়কৃষ্ণ মুখোপাধ্যায়ের গঙ্গাকূলবর্তী প্রসিদ্ধ লাইব্রেরী-গৃহে বাস করিয়াছিলেন। জমিদার মহাশয়ের অনুগ্রহে বন্ধুগণ মধুসূদনকে তথায় লইয়া গিয়াছিলেন। এই সকল সহায় ব্যক্তির সহানুভূতিতে তিনি জীবনের শেষপ্রাণে পৌঁছিয়াও সান্ত্বনা পাইতেন। ব্যারিস্টার উমেশচন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ও গৌরদাস-বাবু তাঁহার মৃত্যু-শয্যায় প্রায় সর্বদাই উপস্থিত থাকিতেন। ক্রমশঃ মধুসূদন ও

হেনরিয়েটার অবস্থা ক্রীণতর হইয়া আসিতেছিল। মৃতরাং চিকিৎসার সুবন্দোবস্তের জন্ত বন্ধুগণ তাঁহাদিগকে কত্যা শর্ম্মিষ্ঠার নিকট কলিকাতায় বেনিয়াপুকুরে লইয়া আসিলেন। মধুসূদন কখনও কখনও পত্নীর রোগ-যন্ত্রণা দেখিয়া উৎকণ্ঠিত হইয়া উঠিতেন, কিন্তু কোনও প্রকার উপশম করিবার শক্তি তাঁহার ছিল না। একদিন গৌরদাসবাবু হেনরিয়েটাকে রোগ-যন্ত্রণায় অত্যন্ত কাতর দেখিয়া যখন সাস্তুনা দিতে গেলেন তখন মধুসূদন বলিয়া উঠিলেন, “afflictions in battalion.”

মধুসূদনের জীবনরশ্মি যখন প্রায় নির্ব্বাণোন্মুখ তখন তাঁহাকে আলিপুর জেনারেল হাসপাতালে আনা হইল। মৃত্যুর মাত্র সাত দিন পূর্বে তিনি মৃত্যুশয্যাশায়িনী জীবনের দুঃখের সঙ্গিনীকে একাকিনী পরিত্যাগ করিয়া চলিয়া আসিলেন। পত্নীর দুঃখে কবির চিন্ত বেদনায় ভরিয়া গেল, নয়নে অবিরল অশ্রু বহিতে লাগিল, কিন্তু অসহায় মধুসূদন চিরবিদায়ক্ষেণে পুত্রকন্যা ও অভাগিনী পত্নীর দিকে নির্নিমেষ নয়নে তাকাইয়া রহিলেন। হাসপাতালে তাঁহার সেবা ও শুশ্রূষার কোনও প্রকার ব্যাঘাত হয় নাই। কিন্তু রোগ উপশমের দিকে না গিয়া বৃদ্ধি পাইতে লাগিল। এক একদিন তিনি রোগযন্ত্রণায় অজ্ঞান হইয়া পড়িতেন। যখন তাঁহার জ্ঞান হইত, অসহায় শিশুপুত্রদ্বয় ও পত্নীর কথা স্মরণ করিয়া তিনি নীরবে অশ্রু বর্ষণ করিতেন। একদিন তিনি হুহুদ মনোমোহন ঘোষ মহাশয়কে বলিয়াছিলেন, “মনোমোহন, তোমায় আর অধিক কি বলিব! আমার শিশুগুলি যেন অনাহারে প্রাণত্যাগ না করে এই দেখিও।”

এদিকে বেনিয়াপুকুরে হেনরিয়েটার জীবন শেষ হইয়া আসিতেছিল। স্বামী বিরহিণী অভাগিনী হেনরিয়েটা ১৮৭৩ খ্রষ্টাব্দে ২৬শে জুন বৃহস্পতিবার ইহলোক পরিত্যাগ করিয়া চলিয়া গেলেন। মনোমোহন ঘোষ প্রভৃতি সহৃদয় ব্যক্তিগণ তাঁহার সমাধির যথাবিধি ব্যবস্থা করিলেন। আষাঢ়ের মেঘাচ্ছন্ন দিনে হেনরিয়েটার অন্ত্যেষ্টিক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করিয়া বন্ধুগণ ভারাক্রান্ত হৃদয়ে ফিরিয়া আসিলেন, সেদিন অবিরল বৃষ্টিধারায় ও ক্ষণে ক্ষণে মেঘগর্জনে সমস্ত পৃথিবী একটি বিষাদের বিভীষিকা-মূর্ত্তি পরিগ্রহ করিয়াছিল। মনোমোহন ঘোষ মহাশয় হাসপাতালে পৌঁছিয়া ধীরে ধীরে মধুসূদনের কক্ষে প্রবেশ করিলেন। হেনরিয়েটার মৃত্যুসংবাদে মধুসূদন কিছুক্ষণের জন্ত বিহ্বল হইয়া পড়িলেন; পরে কাতরস্বরে বলিয়া উঠিলেন, “জগদীশ! আমরািগের দুইজনকেই একত্র সমাধিস্থ করিলে না কেন?”

কিছুক্ষণ পরে মধুসূদন বলিলেন, “মনোমোহন, তুমি তো শেক্সপীয়ার পড়িয়াছ – তোমার কি সেই পঙ্ক্তি কয়টি স্মরণ হয় ?”

মনোমোহন বাবু বলিলেন, “কোন কয়টি পঙ্ক্তি ?”

মধুসূদন বলিলেন, “লেডী ম্যাকবেথের মৃত্যুতে ম্যাকবেথ যাহা বলিয়াছিলেন। আমার স্মরণশক্তি বিলুপ্ত হইয়াছে, কোনও কথাই আমার স্মরণ হয় না, কিন্তু দেখ দেখি আমি সেই কয়টি পঙ্ক্তি আবৃত্তি করিতেছি, আমার কোনও ভ্রম হয় কিনা।”

“To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time ;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle !
Life 's but a walking shadow ; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more ; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”—

তাহার নিভুল আবৃত্তি শুনিয়া মনোমোহন ঘোষ বলিলেন, “ঠিক হইয়াছে ; কিন্তু এখন এ সকল কথার প্রয়োজন কি ! আপনি আরোগ্য লাভ করিবেন চিন্তা নাই।”

মৃত্যুর পূর্বে মধুসূদন আত্মকৃত কর্মের জন্ত ভগবানের নিকট ক্ষমা প্রার্থনা করিয়াছিলেন। এই সময়ে তিনি নিজের অবস্থার উল্লেখ করিয়া সকলকে সংযমী হইতে বলিতেন এবং রেভারেণ্ড কৃষ্ণমোহন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় মহাশয়ের সহিত ধর্ম্মালোচনা করিতেন। তিনি ভগবানের নিকট কাতর প্রার্থনা করিয়া বলিয়াছেন, “আমি সেই দয়াময়ের করুণার উপর নির্ভর করিয়া মরিতেছি। তিনি যে পাপী-তাপীর উদ্ধারের জন্ত খ্রীষ্টকে পৃথিবীতে প্রেরণ করিয়াছিলেন, ইহা আমি সম্পূর্ণ বিশ্বাস করি।” ধর্ম্মযাজকের প্রথানুযায়ী কৃষ্ণমোহন মৃত্যুর প্রাকালে মধুসূদনকে ভগবানের আশীষ দান করিলেন।

মধুসূদনের অন্ত্যেষ্টিক্রিয়া লইয়া স্থলীয় সমাজের মধ্যে তুমুল আন্দোলন চলিতেছিল। কৃষ্ণমোহন মধুসূদনকে বলিলেন, “তুমি জীবনে কোনও গীর্জার সহিত সংশ্লিষ্ট ছিলে না। সুতরাং তোমার অন্ত্যেষ্টিক্রিয়ায় বহু বিস্ময় ঘটবার

সম্ভাবনা।” নির্ভীক মধুসূদন তদুত্তরে বলিলেন, “আমি মনুষ্য-নির্মিত গীর্জার সংশ্রব গ্রাহ্য করি না। আমি ঈশ্বরে বিশ্রাম করিতে যাইতেছি। তিনি আমাকে তাঁহার সর্বোৎকৃষ্ট বিশ্রামাগারে লুকাইয়া রাখিবেন। কেবল আমার শেষ অনুরোধ পৃথিবীতলে শ্যাম-শশুই যেন আমার সমাধি আচ্ছাদন করিয়া রাখে।”

১৮৭৩ খৃষ্টাব্দে ২৯শে জুন রবিবার প্রাতঃকাল হইতেই মধুসূদনের অবস্থার ব্যতিক্রম পরিলক্ষিত হইতে লাগিল। ক্রমশঃ বেলা-বৃদ্ধির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তাঁহার সমস্ত শরীরে মৃত্যুর করাল ছায়া ঘনাইয়া আসিল। তাঁহার বাকশক্তি রুদ্ধ হইয়া গেল ও চৈতন্য বিলুপ্ত হইল। দ্বিপ্রহরে বেলা দুই ঘটিকার সময়ে পুত্রকন্যা, শুশ্রূষাকারিণীগণ, ডাক্তারগণ ও বন্ধুবান্ধবগণের সম্মুখে বস্ত্রের কবিশিরোমণির প্রাণবায়ু নির্গত হইল। জীবনের শেষমুহূর্ত্ত পর্য্যন্ত বাগ্দেরীর চরণতলে অর্ঘ্যদান করিয়া মধুসূদন চিরবিদায় লইলেন।

মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্তের জীবন-কাহিনী একটি বিয়োগান্ত নাটকের স্থায়। তাঁহার মেঘনাদবধ কাব্য যেমন সর্বপ্রশেষ্ত বিষাদান্ত কাব্য, কৃষ্ণকুমারী নাটক যেমন একটি শোকান্ত নাটক, তাঁহার নিজস্ব জীবনও ইহাদেরই অনুরূপ। যিনি বাল্যে প্রচুর ঐশ্বর্য্যে প্রতিপালিত হইয়াছিলেন, যৌবনে যশ ও কৃতিত্ব যাহার চতুর্দিকে বিস্তৃত হইয়াছিল, তিনিই আবার প্রোঢ়ে দারিদ্র্যপীড়নে বন্ধুবান্ধবের একান্ত অনুকম্পায় তাঁহার জীবন অতিবাহিত করিয়াছিলেন। দাতব্য চিকিৎসালয়ে তিনি পত্নী ও পুত্রকন্যার স্নেহাবেষ্টন হইতে বিচ্যুত হইয়া দীন অনাথের হ্রাস পরলোকগমন করেন। জন-সাধারণের নিকট তাঁহার জীবন-কাহিনী পরম শিক্ষার বিষয়।

জাতির সৌভাগ্য না হইলে মহাপুরুষের জন্ম হয় না। যখনই জাতির ধর্ম্ম, নীতি ও সংস্কারের অধঃপতন দেখা যায়, তখনই জাতিকে উত্তোলন করিতে মহাপুরুষগণ জন্মগ্রহণ করেন। বাংলায় ১৮৪০ হইতে ১৮৭০ খৃষ্টাব্দ পর্য্যন্ত—ত্রিশ বৎসর ধরিয়া যে পান্শ্চাত্যভাবের প্রবল বহ্নি বহিয়া গিয়াছিল তাহা বাংলা সাহিত্যের ও সমাজের পক্ষে কল্যাণকর ছিল না। শিক্ষিত ব্যক্তিগণ সকলেই পান্শ্চাত্য শিক্ষা ও সভ্যতার আলোকে আকৃষ্ট হইয়া পড়িলেন। মধুসূদনও এই যুগে জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়া পান্শ্চাত্য শিক্ষা ও সভ্যতার কুহকজালে আবদ্ধ হইয়া পড়িলেন। বিদেশী সাহিত্যের প্রবল আলোকরশ্মির পাশে তৎকালীন বাংলা সাহিত্যের স্তিমিত প্রদীপ নিতান্ত কীণপ্রভ হইয়া পড়িয়াছিল। উচ্ছ্বাসপ্রবণ

কবি মধুসূদন পাশ্চাত্যের ভাবধারায় এতদূর অনুপ্রাণিত হইলেন যে ধর্ম্মাস্তুর গ্রহণ করিতে বিন্দুমাত্রও কুণ্ঠিত হইলেন না। পাশ্চাত্যশিক্ষায় অনুপ্রাণিত এবং বিদেশী সাহিত্যে মগ্ন হইয়া তিনি তাঁহার প্রথম গ্রন্থ ও কবিতাবলী বিদেশীয় ভাষাতে রচনা করিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু সৌভাগ্যের বিষয় তাঁহার এই মোহ শীঘ্রই কাটিয়া গেল। তিনি বুঝিলেন যে যশস্বী হইতে হইলে মাতৃভাষার সাধনা করা প্রয়োজন। সুতরাং তিনি মাতৃভাষার প্রতি আশৈশব-পোষিত স্বর্ণা দূর করিয়া বাংলা-সাহিত্য-সাধনায় আত্মনিয়োগ করিলেন। ইংরাজী-সাহিত্যরচনার পরিবর্তে বাংলা-সাহিত্য-ভাণ্ডারকে সমৃদ্ধ করিতে তিনি দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ হইলেন। অনুতাপদগ্ধ সন্তান যেমন করিয়া জননীর ক্রোড়ে ফিরিয়া আসিয়া আত্মকৃত পাপের প্রায়শ্চিত্তস্বরূপ দ্বিগুণ আগ্রহে জননীর সেবায় নিরত হয়, মধুসূদনও সেইরূপ পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষা ও সভ্যতার আবেষ্টনকে ছিন্ন করিয়া বাংলার ক্রোড়ে ফিরিয়া আসিলেন এবং মাতৃভাষার সাধনায় নিমগ্ন হইলেন। তখন তাঁহার একমাত্র সঙ্কল্প হইল এমন মধুচক্র রচনা করিবেন

“গৌড়জন যাহে

আনন্দে করিবে পান সুধা নিরবধি।”

তিন চারি বৎসরের মধ্যে তিনি কঠোর অধ্যবসায়দ্বারা বাংলা সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে উজ্জ্বল করিয়া তুলিলেন। সংসারের নানাবিধ প্রতিকূল অবস্থাতেও তিনি বাংলা ভাষা এবং বাংলার মাতৃস্থানীয় সংস্কৃত ভাষা ও সাহিত্য অধ্যয়নে সর্বদাই নিয়ত থাকিতেন। কেহ তাঁহার এই অতিরিক্ত পরিশ্রমের কথা বললে তিনি উত্তর দিতেন,—

“ * * * * * হাত বুলাইলে,

জননী, ব্যথিত দেহে, কোথা ব্যথা থাকে !”

স্বীয় অপ্রতিম কবিত্বশক্তির প্রভাবে মধুসূদন দীনা মাতৃভাষাকে অভাবনীয় রূপে পরিপুষ্ট করিয়া অভিনব সাজে সজ্জিত করিলেন। তাঁহার মেধা ছিল অনন্তসাধারণ, তদুপরি প্রগাঢ় কাব্যানুরাগ, এই দুইটির সংমিশ্রণে বঙ্গসাহিত্যের একেবারে রূপ বদলাইয়া গেল। তাঁহার অলৌকিক ক্ষমতাগুণে অনাদৃতা মাতৃভাষা নূতন ছন্দে, নূতন ভাষায় ও রসমাধুর্য্যে সমৃদ্ধ হইয়া উঠিল।

বঙ্গসাহিত্যে মধুসূদনের দান অতুলনীয় এবং অপরিমেয়। তিনি বঙ্গসাহিত্যে প্রথম অমিত্রাক্ষর ছন্দ, নাটক, প্রহসন, চতুর্দশপদী কবিতা এবং গীতিকাব্যের

প্রবর্তন করিয়াছেন। এতদ্ব্যতীত তিনি প্রাচ্য কবিগণের কোমলতার সঙ্গে প্রতীচ্য কবিগণের ওজস্বিতার অপূর্ব সম্মিলন করিয়া পূর্ব-পশ্চিমের সম্মিলন-যজ্ঞের যোগ্য ঋষি হইয়াছিলেন। প্রাচ্য ও প্রতীচ্য আদর্শের সম্মিলনে তাঁহার সর্ববতোমুখী প্রতিভার প্রকৃষ্ট পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্য” এই প্রতিভার জ্বলন্ত নিদর্শন।

মধুসূদন বর্তমান কবিকুলের অগ্রদূত ও পথপ্রদর্শক ছিলেন। তিনি যে প্রেমিক, উদার এবং মহানের উপাসক ছিলেন তাহা তাঁহার বৈশিষ্ট্যকে বিশ্লেষণ করিলেই দেখা যায়। প্রকৃতির অনবদ্য সৌন্দর্য, মানবচরিত্রের সূক্ষ্মাদপি সূক্ষ্মতম স্ফুরণকে উপলব্ধি করিবার অস্তুর্দৃষ্টি তাঁহার যেমন ছিল, তাহা এক রবীন্দ্রনাথ বাতীত অন্য কোনও বাঙ্গালী কবির মধ্যে দেখা যায় নাই। মধুসূদন জাতীয় প্রচলিত সাহিত্যের আমূল পরিবর্তন সাধন করিয়া এক অভিনব কাব্য-জগৎ সৃষ্টি করিয়াছেন। তিনি বর্তমান যুগে বাংলার প্রথম কবিগুরু। তাঁহার কল্পনাশক্তি ছিল মহাসমুদ্রের গায় অনন্ত ও অসীম। তাঁহার প্রদত্ত আলোকে বাঙ্গালী বিদ্যৎসমাজ বঙ্গসাহিত্যকে নূতন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীতে দেখিতে পারিয়াছেন।

মধুসূদনের গায় মহাকবির আবির্ভাব বাঙ্গালী জাতির গৌরবের বিষয়। সাহিত্যসম্রাট বঙ্কমচন্দ্র বঙ্গদর্শনে লিখিয়াছেন “জাতীয় পতাকা উড়াইয়া দাও, তাহাতে নাম লেখ শ্রীমধুসূদন।” মধুসূদন মেঘনাদ-বধ মহাকাব্য রচনা করিয়া বঙ্গসাহিত্যে গৌরবময় সিংহাসন লাভ করিয়াছেন। তিনি বঙ্গসাহিত্যে প্রথম এবং শ্রেষ্ঠ মহাকাব্যের স্রষ্টা।

যশের উর্দ্ধতম শিখরে পৌঁছিয়াও মধুসূদন জীবনে কখনও নিরবচ্ছিন্ন সুখ পান নাই। মিতাচারের ও আত্মসংযমের অভাবই তাঁহার জীবনকে বিষাদময় করিয়াছিল। ইন্দ্রিয়-সংযমের অভাবে স্বেচ্ছানুরূপ কার্যের পরিণাম যে কতদূর শোচনীয় তাহা কবি মর্মে মর্মে অনুভব করিয়া গিয়াছেন। সুখশাস্তির দিক্ দিয়া বিচার করিলে দেখা যায় তাঁহার জীবন ব্যর্থ হইয়াছিল। পরান্ন ভোজন করিয়া এবং পরের আশ্রয়ে তাঁহার শেষ জীবন অতিবাহিত হইয়াছিল। স্ব-ধর্ম্মভ্যাগী বলিয়া তিনি দেশবাসিগণের নিকট আশানুরূপ সহানুভূতি পর্য্যন্ত পান নাই। মিথ্যা মরীচিকার আশায় ঘুরিয়া কবি আক্ষেপ করিয়াছেন—

“আশার ছলনে ভুলি কি ফল লভিষু, হায়,
তাই ভাবি মনে।

* * * * *

রে প্রমত্ত মন মম ! কবে পোহাইবে রাত্তি ?

জাগিবি রে কবে ?”

—(আত্মবিলাপ)

স্বদেশের পরিচয়চ্ছলে তিনি বলিয়াছেন—

“যে দেশে উদয়ি রবি উদয়-অচলে
ধরণীর বিশ্বাধর চূষ্মেন আদরে
প্রভাতে ; যে দেশে গেয়ে স্নমধুর কলে
ধাতার প্রশংসাগীত, বহেন সাগরে
জারুবী ; যে দেশে ভেদি বারিদ-মণ্ডলে
(তুষারে রচিত বাস উদ্ধ - কলেবরে
রজতের উপবীত, স্রোতোরূপে গলে)
শোভেন শৈলেন্দ্ররাজ ।”

* * * * *

“সে দেশে জনম মম, জননী ভারতী ।”

—(পরিচয়)

মধুসূদনের দেশাত্মবোধ এই কবিতার মধ্য দিয়া জীবন্ত অভিব্যক্তি পাইয়াছে। স্বদূর প্রবাসে বসিয়াও তিনি মানসনেত্রে সর্বদাই দেশের সৌন্দর্য্য উপলব্ধি করিতেন।

পাশ্চাত্য-কৃষ্টি-সমুদ্র-মন্ত্ৰনে অমৃত ও হলাহল দুই-ই উঠিয়াছিল। মধুসূদন যোগিশ্রেষ্ঠ মহাদেবের শ্রায় হলাহল পান করিয়াছেন আর সমগ্র দেশবাসীকে অমৃতদান করিয়া চিরবরণ্য হইয়াছেন। বাগ্‌দেবীর চরণতলে নিজেকে পূর্ণাঙ্গতি দিয়া মধুসূদন তাঁহার যজ্ঞ সমাপন করিয়াছেন।

নিতাস্ত অর্থাভাবের জন্য তাঁহার অস্ত্যেষ্টি-ক্রিয়া অতি দীনভাবে সম্পন্ন হইয়াছিল, এবং সমাধিতে কোনও প্রকার স্মৃতিচিহ্ন অঙ্কিত হয় নাই। মধুসূদনের মৃত্যুর কয়েক বৎসর পরে বঙ্কুগণের একান্ত চেষ্টায় তাঁহার

মৃত্তিস্তম্ভ সংস্থাপিত হইয়াছে এবং তাঁহারই রচিত সমাধিলিপি প্রস্তরফলকে উৎকীর্ণ হইয়াছে—

“দাঁড়াও পথিক-বর, জন্ম যদি তব
বঙ্গে ! তিষ্ঠ কণকাল ! এ সমাধিস্থলে
(জননীর কোলে শিশু লভয়ে যেমতি
বিরাম) মহৌর পদে মহানিদ্রাবৃত
দত্ত কুলোদ্ভব কবি শ্রীমধুসূদন ।
যশোরে সাগরদাঁড়ী কবতাক্ষ-তীরে
জন্মভূমি, জন্মদাতা দত্ত মহামতি
রাজনারায়ণ নামে, জননী জ্ঞানবী !”

মহাকাব্য

(১)

“তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব” মধুসূদনের প্রথম মহাকাব্য। ইহা আয়তনে ছোট—মহাকাব্যের মধ্যে যে সকল গুণ আমরা প্রত্যাশা করিতে পারি, তাহা ইহাতে নাই। সেইজন্য ইহাকে মহাকাব্য হিসাবে বিচার না করিয়া মধুসূদনের প্রথম প্রয়াস হিসাবে দেখিলে ইহার খাঁটি মূল্য নির্ধারণ করা যাইবে। “তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব কাব্য”-সম্পর্কে সর্বাপেক্ষা উল্লেখযোগ্য কথা এই যে, ইহা “মেঘনাদ-বধে”র পূর্বগামী। “তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব কাব্য” বাংলার প্রথম অমিত্রাক্ষর চন্দ্রে রচিত কাব্য। ইহা মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্তেরও মহাকাব্য-রচনার প্রথম প্রচেষ্টা। এই কাব্যখানি তাঁহাকে কাব্য-রচনার দিকে অগ্রসর করে। ইহা সম্পূর্ণরূপে প্রাচ্য পৌরাণিক আখ্যায়িকাবলম্বনে রচিত হইয়াছে। পাশ্চাত্য কবিগণের প্রভাব ইহাতে তেমন বহুলপরিমাণে লক্ষিত হয় না।

সুন্দ ও উপসুন্দ নামে দুই দৈত্যরাজ তপস্কার বলে ব্রহ্মার নিকট হইতে এইরূপ বর লাভ করিয়াছিল যে, তাহারা অন্তের অবস্থা, শুধু একে অপরকে নিধন করিতে পারিবে। পরাক্রমে তাহারা ত্রিভুবন জয় করিয়াছিল—ফলে অমরাবতী তাহাদের অধিকৃত হইল। দেবরাজ ইন্দ্র পরাজিত হইয়া স্বর্গ পরিত্যাগ করিতে বাধ্য হইলেন। তিনি হিমাচলের বিভীষিকাময় নিভৃত শৃঙ্গে অবস্থান করিতে লাগিলেন। ব্রহ্মার আদেশে বিশ্বকর্মা এই দুই দেবদেবীর বিনাশার্থ স্বর্গীয় সমস্ত সার-পদার্থের তিল তিল লইয়া এক অলোকসামান্য মনোমোহিনী নারীর সৃষ্টি করিলেন। এই নারীর সৌন্দর্যের মোহে মুগ্ধ হইয়া ভ্রাতৃত্ব পরস্পরের সহিত কলহ করিয়া নিহত হইল।

এই কাব্যখানি মাত্র চারিটি সর্গে সমাপ্ত হইয়াছে। পূর্বেরই বলিয়াছি, কাব্যখানি কবির প্রথম রচনা, সুতরাং মহাকাব্যোচিত লক্ষণ—যেমন অষ্টাধিক সর্গ, অসাধারণ গুণসম্পন্ন ব্যক্তির চরিত্র-মাহাত্ম্য, নানা রসের রসাত্মক

বাক্য,—এই কাব্যে অধিক পরিমাণে দেখা যায় না। ইহার ভাষা সরল ও প্রাঞ্জল নহে, সেইজন্য ভাবের স্বাভাবিক স্ফুরণের অভাব পরিলক্ষিত হয়। “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্যে”ও দুর্বোধ্য সংস্কৃত শব্দের প্রয়োগ দেখা যায়, কিন্তু তজ্জন্য ভাষার দ্রুতগতি ও ভাবের সমৃদ্ধির অভাব হয় নাই। বিখ্যাত যেমন নানাবিধ রত্নসংগ্রহকারী নৈপুণ্যসহকারে তিলোত্তমাকে সৃষ্টি করিয়াছিলেন, কবিবরও সেইরূপ নানা গ্রন্থ হইতে নানাবিধ ভাব ও ভাষা সংগ্রহ করিয়াছেন, কিন্তু বিচার-নৈপুণ্যের অভাবে কাব্যোচিত রস-মাধুর্যের ও সৌন্দর্যের হানি অনেক স্থানে পরিলক্ষিত হয়। মধুসূদন কাব্যখানিতে কোনও বিশেষ রসের প্রাধান্য দেন নাই। রসের অবতারণা অপেক্ষা অলঙ্কার-বিচারের প্রতি তিনি অধিক লক্ষ্য রাখিয়াছেন। সূর্যলোক, চন্দ্রলোক এবং যমপুরী প্রভৃতি চিত্রের যে কোনও অংশ উদ্ধৃত করিলেই কবির কল্পনা-কৌশলের পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। কিন্তু শব্দের প্রাচুর্য ও অলঙ্কারের বহুল-প্রয়োগের জন্য কাব্যখানি স্থানে স্থানে দুর্বোধ্য হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। ভাষা বর্ণনার উপযোগী হইলেও প্রতিমধুর নহে :—

“ * * * লৌহ, যার তনু
অক্ষয়, তাপিলে অগ্নি, মহারাগে ধাতু
জলে অগ্নিসম তেজঃ—অগ্নিকুণ্ডে পড়ি
পুড়িছে—বিষম জ্বালা যেন ঘৃণা করি,—
নীরবে শোকাগ্নি যথা সহে বীর-হিয়া।” —(তৃতীয় সর্গ)

এই কাব্যখানি প্রথমে জনসাধারণের নিকট হস্তাস্পদ ও উপেক্ষিত হইয়াছিল। কিন্তু মধুসূদন তাঁহার অসাধারণ মানসিক বল এবং দৃঢ় সঙ্কল্পের জন্য একটুও বিচলিত হন নাই। তিনি সকল প্রকার শ্লেষোক্তি, বিজ্ঞপ অগ্রাহ্য করিয়া সাহিত্য-সাধনার দিকে ক্রমশঃ অগ্রসর হইতে লাগিলেন এবং স্বল্পকালের মধ্যেই “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্য” লিখিয়া দেশের সুধীমণ্ডলীকে বিস্মিত ও স্তম্ভিত করিয়া দিলেন। এই শেষোক্ত কাব্যে যেমন কবির প্রদীপ্ত প্রতিভার বিকাশ হইয়াছে, “তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব কাব্যে” তাহা হয় নাই। কিন্তু তাঁহার “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্যে”র পূর্বাভাস ইহাতে দেখা যায়। নিরপেক্ষ বিচারে ইহাকে “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্য”রূপ মহাশক্তির বোধন-সঙ্গীত বলা যাইতে পারে। এই ভাবে বিচার করিলে কাব্যখানির মাধুর্য ও সৌন্দর্য অস্বীকার্য।

দেবগণের চরিত্র-বর্ণনায় কবি কোনও চরিত্রকেই জীবন্ত আলেখ্যরূপে চিত্রিত করেন নাই—যম, বরুণ, অগ্নি, বায়ু, কুবের এবং কান্তিকৈয় প্রভৃতি দেবগণকে যথাযোগ্য রূপ দিয়াছেন মাত্র। এই কাব্যে মধুসূদনের চরিত্র-চিত্রণে দক্ষতা সম্যকভাবে পরিস্ফুট হয় নাই। শুধু দেবরাজ ইন্দ্রকে তিনি পৌরাণিক ইন্দ্র হইতে সম্পূর্ণ বিভিন্ন করিয়া চিত্রিত করিয়াছেন। ইন্দ্র এই কাব্যে কামাতুর ভোগবলাসী স্বর্গপতি নহেন, কর্তব্যপারায়ণ প্রজাবৎসল নৃপতির ন্যায় চিত্রিত হইয়াছেন। গিরিশৃঙ্গে শচীদেবীকে দেখিয়া সর্বপ্রথম তাঁহার আশ্রিত দেবগণের কুশলবার্ত্তাই তিনি জিজ্ঞাসা করিয়াছেন :—

“কিস্তু, প্রিয়ে, কহ. এবে কুশল বারতা।

কোথা জলনাথ ? কোথা অলকার পতি ?

কোথা হৈমবতীসূত তারকাসূদন,

শমন, পবন, আর যত দেবনেতা ?”—(প্রথম সর্গ)

আবার অগ্নত্র দেবরাজ ভাগ্যবিড়ম্বনায় বারংবার পীড়িত হইয়া যে খেদোক্তি করিয়াছেন তাহা পাঠকের চিত্তে গভীর রেখাপাত করে :—

হায়, বিধি, কোন্ পাপে মোর প্রতি তুমি

এ হেন দারুণ ? পুনঃ পুনঃ এ যাতনা

কেন গো ভোগাও দাসে ?”

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* * * “হায়রে দেবেন্দ্র

আমি স্বর্গপতি, মোর রক্ষিত যে জন

রক্ষিতে তাহারে মম না হয় ক্ষমতা ? —(দ্বিতীয় সর্গ)

বায়ু এবং যমরাজের ধ্বংসের প্রস্তাবে তিনি উত্তর করিয়াছেন,

* * * “যথা ধর্ম্ম জয় তথা !

অন্ধ্যায় করিতে যদি আরম্ভ আমরা,

সুরাসুরে বিভেদ কি থাকিবেক কহ,

জগতে ?”

—(দ্বিতীয় সর্গ)

এই অংশে কবি ইন্দ্রের চরিত্রের মহিমা কীর্ত্তন করিয়া চরিত্রটিকে উজ্জ্বলতর

করিয়াছেন। দেবরাজের মহত্বের সর্বাপেক্ষা প্রকৃষ্ট পরিচয় পাওয়া যায় যখন তিনি দৈত্যদ্বয়ের অস্ত্যেষ্ঠিক্রিয়ার উপলক্ষ্যে বলিয়াছেন,—

“আনহ চন্দনকাষ্ঠ কেহ, কেহ ঘৃত ;
আইস সবে দানবের প্রেতকর্ষ্য করি
যথাবিধি। জীবকূলে সামান্য সে নহে,
তোমা সবা যার শরে কাতর সমরে।
বিশ্বনাশী বজ্রাগ্নিরে অবহেলা করি,
জিনিল সে বাহুবলে দেবকুল-রাজে,
কেমনে তাহার দেহ দিবে সবে আজি
খেচর ভূচর জীবে ?” —(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

কবির কল্পনায় দেবরাজের মহিমা এক অভিনব রূপ পাইয়াছে। কাব্যের এই অংশটি চিত্ৰচমৎকারী।

তিলোত্তমার রূপদর্শনে মুগ্ধ দৈত্যরাজদ্বয়ের কথোপকথন কোতূহলোদ্দীপক ও হাস্যোদ্দীপক বলিয়া মনে হয়। উভয়েই এই নারী লাভ করিবার জন্ত উন্মত্ত, লালায়িত এবং শ্লীলতা পরিহার করিয়া কলহে প্রবৃত্ত হইতেছে। কনিষ্ঠ ভ্রাতা বলিতেছে,

* * * *
“কি কারণে তুমি স্পর্শ এ বামারে,
ভ্রাতৃবধু তব, বীর।” —(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

তদুত্তরে জ্যেষ্ঠ ভ্রাতা বলিলেন,

“বরিসু কণ্ঠায় আমি তোমার সম্মুখে
এখনি। আমার ভার্য্যা, গুরুজন তব ;
দেবর বামার তুমি, দেহ হাত ছাড়ি।” —(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

ইহা শুনিয়া কনিষ্ঠ ভ্রাতা উপস্থিত ক্রোধে উন্মত্ত হইয়া অসি নিক্ষেপিত করিয়া বলিয়া উঠিলেন,

* * * “রে অধর্ম্ম-আচারি
কুলান্ধার। ভ্রাতৃবধু মাতৃসম মানি।
তীর অঙ্গ পরশিস্ অনঙ্গপীড়নে !” —(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

কলহের পরিণামে উভয়েই পরস্পরের হস্তে নিহত হইল। মধুসূদন এইখানে হান্তরসের অবতারণা করিয়াছেন। সমগ্র কাব্যখানিতে কোথাও বিশেষ কোনও রসের প্রাধান্য দেন নাই। সেইজন্য হান্তরসের অবতারণা কাব্যখানিকে লঘু মাধুর্য্য দান করিয়াছে। পৌরাণিক কাহিনীকে কল্পনাধারা অতিরঞ্জিত করিয়া মধুসূদন একখানি অভিনব কাব্য সৃষ্টি করিয়াছেন। মহাকবিরা কোনও একটি বিষয়কে নানা দিক্ হইতে বর্ণনা করিয়া তাহার মধ্যে বিশালতা ও গৌরব আরোপ করেন। মধুসূদন “তিলোত্তমা-সম্ভব কাব্যে” এই ক্ষমতার প্রকৃষ্ট পরিচয় দিয়াছেন। যখন স্থির হইল যে, সুন্দ ও উপসুন্দের মধ্যে বিরোধের সৃষ্টি করিতে হইবে, তখন দেবগণ উপায় নির্ধারণ করিতে মনোনিবেশ করিলেন। যম, বায়ু, কুবের, কার্তিকেয় প্রভৃতি এই বিষয়ে তাঁহাদের মতামত প্রকাশ করেন। শুধু যে বিষয়টি নানা দিক্ হইতে বর্ণিত হইয়াছে তাহা নহে, দেবতাদিগের চরিত্রের বৈশিষ্ট্যও ফুটিয়া উঠিয়াছে। যমের উত্তর সর্বাপেক্ষা উল্লেখযোগ্য —

“উত্তর করিলা যম ;—‘এ বিষয়ে, দেব
দেবেন্দ্র, স্বীকারি আমি নিজ অক্ষমতা।
বাল্পরাক্রমে কৰ্ম্ম-নির্ব্বাহ যেখানে,
দেবনাথ, সেথা আমি। তোমার প্রসাদে,
এই যে প্রচণ্ড দণ্ড ব্রহ্মাণ্ডনাশক,
শিখেছি ধরিতে এরে ; নাহি কিন্তু জানি
চালাইতে লেখনী, পশিতে শকার্গবে
অর্থরত্ন-লোভে — যেন বিচার ধীর !’ ” —(তৃতীয় সর্গ)

বর্ণনার গুণে কাব্যখানির সৌন্দর্য্য ও মাধুর্য্যের বিকাশ হইয়াছে। হিমাচলের বর্ণনা, তিলোত্তমা-সৃষ্টি-বর্ণনা, এবং উৎসবমগ্না দৈত্যপুরীর বর্ণনা উল্লেখযোগ্য। যে কোনও অংশ উদ্ধৃত করিলেই দেখা যাইবে কবির কবিত্ব বঙ্গসাহিত্যে তুলনাহীন।—

“উঠিল অম্বরপথে হৈম ব্যোমযান
মহাবেগে ঐরাবত সহ সৌদামিনী
বহি পয়োবাহ যথা ; রথচূড়া-শিরে
শোভিল দেবপতাকা ; বিদ্যুৎ আকৃতি,
কিস্তু শাস্ত্র প্রভাময় ;” —(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

এই কাব্যের তৃতীয় সর্গটি শ্রেষ্ঠ সর্গ। বর্ণনার মাধুর্য্যে, রূপস্থিতির কৌশলে ও কোন কোন স্থলে কথোপকথনের সাবলীলতায় এই সর্গে “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্য”র পূর্বাভাস পাওয়া যায়।

(২)

যে কাব্যের মধ্য দিয়া সমগ্র জাতির আদর্শ উপলব্ধি করা যায়, সমগ্র দেশের স্বরূপ অভিব্যক্তি পায়, যাহার পটভূমিকায় বৃহত্তর জীবন পরিপূর্ণ আদর্শ লইয়া উপস্থাপিত হয়, তাহাই মহাকাব্য। কালের আবর্তের মধ্যে পড়িয়াও যে গ্রন্থ যুগ যুগ ধরিয়া অবস্থান্তরিত বা পরিবর্তিত হয় না, দেশকাল-পাত্রভেদেও অপরিবর্তনীয় থাকে, সেই গ্রন্থই একমাত্র “মহাকাব্য” নামে অভিনন্দিত হইতে পারে। মহাকাব্যের অগ্রতর প্রধান লক্ষণ তাহার সুবিন্যস্ত গঠন—মহাকাব্যের প্রত্যেক সর্গের সঙ্গে তাহার প্রত্যেক সর্গের মিল বা ঐক্য না থাকিলে চলিবে না। তারপর কাব্যটি সর্বপ্রকার রস-মাধুর্য্যে পরিপূর্ণ হইবে। শুধু বিষয়-বস্তুটি বৃহৎ ও মহান হইলেই চলিবে না, বর্ণনায় বিস্তৃতি ও ওজস্বিতা আনিতে হইবে। স্বর্গীয় দীনেশচন্দ্র সেনের “রামায়ণী কথা”র ভূমিকায় কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর বলিয়াছেন, “সমগ্র দেশের সমগ্র জাতির সরস্বতী হুঁহাদিগকে (ব্যাস ও বাণ্মীকি) আশ্রয় করিতে পারেন—হুঁহারা যাহা রচনা করেন, তাহাকে কোনও ব্যক্তিবিশেষের রচনা বলিয়া মনে হয় না। মনে হয় যেন তাহা বৃহৎ বনস্পতির মত দেশের ভূতল-ঈর্ষর হইতে উদ্ভূত হইয়া সেই দেশকেই আশ্রয়চ্ছায়া দান করিয়াছে। কালিদাসের শকুন্তলা ও কুমারসম্ভবে বিশেষ ভাবে কালিদাসের নিপুণ হস্তের পরিচয় পাই। কিন্তু রামায়ণ মহাভারতকে মনে হয় যেন জাহ্নবী ও হিমাচলের স্রোত তাহারা ভারতেরই—বাণ্মীকি ব্যাস উপলক্ষ্য মাত্র।

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ধন্য সেই কবিগুণকে, কালের মহাপ্রাস্তরের মধ্যে যাঁহাদের নাম হারাইয়া গেছে, কিন্তু যাঁহাদের বাণী বহুকোটি নরনারীর দ্বারে দ্বারে আজিও অজস্রধারায় শক্তি ও শান্তি বহন করিতেছে, শত শত প্রাচীন শতাব্দীর পলি-মুক্তিকা অহরহঃ আনয়ন করিয়া ভারতবর্ষের চিত্তভূমিকে আজিও উর্বরা করিয়া রাখিতেছে।”

মাইকেল মধুসূদনের “মেঘনাদ-বধ” মহাকাব্য কি না বর্তমানে আমরা তাহারই আলোচনা করিব। মধুসূদন রামায়ণের কাহিনী গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন। কিন্তু বাস্তবিক ও কৃত্তিবাসের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর সহিত তাঁহার দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর প্রভেদ অপরিসীম। এই দিক্ দিয়া বিচার করিলে “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্য”কে মহাকাব্য বলিয়া স্বীকার করা যায় না। “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্যে” মেঘনাদের শৌর্য্য, বীরত্ব ও প্রমীলার দীপ্ত সতীত্ব-মাহাত্ম্য সমধিক পরিস্ফুট হইয়াছে। মেঘনাদের নিকট রাম ও লক্ষ্মণ অপেক্ষাকৃত নিম্নপ্রভ হইয়া পড়িয়াছেন। মাইকেল নিজেই বলিয়াছেন: “I do not like your Ram and his rabble.” এই দিক্ দিয়া দেখিতে গেলে ভারতবর্ষের যে চিরন্তন আদর্শ রাম, লক্ষ্মণ ও সীতাকে আশ্রয় করিয়া যুগে যুগে কীৰ্ত্তিত হইয়াছে, তাহাকে মাইকেল শিরোধার্য্য করেন নাই। তাঁহার কাব্য শ্রেষ্ঠ কাব্য হইতে পারে, কিন্তু হিন্দুর সনাতন আদর্শকে তিনি রূপ দিতে পারেন নাই। অবশ্য মহাকাব্যের অন্তর প্রধান গুণ—বিশালতা ও বিস্তৃতি ইহার মধ্যে যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে পাওয়া যায়। বিষয়বস্তুর গৌরবে, চরিত্র-সৃষ্টির মাহাত্ম্যে ও বর্ণনার ওজস্বিতায় “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্য” অতুলনীয়। কাব্যের প্রধান নায়ক নায়িকাগণের চরিত্র-মাহাত্ম্য এবং বিষয়ের বিস্তৃতিতে যুগপৎ বিস্ময়ে ও আনন্দে স্তম্ভিত ও অভিভূত হওয়া যদি মহাকাব্যের লক্ষণ হয় তবে আমরা এই কাব্যটিকে সেই পর্যায়ে অভিহিত হইবার যোগ্য মনে করি। পূর্বেই বলিয়াছি বিষয়বস্তুটি মহান্ এবং বৃহৎ হওয়া প্রয়োজন। আমরা দেখিতে পাই সভা-বর্ণনা, যুদ্ধক্ষেত্র-বর্ণনা, লঙ্কার ঐশ্বর্য্য-বর্ণনা ও স্বর্গের বর্ণনায় বিশালতার অভাব নাই। নায়ক-নায়িকাগণের—যথা রাবণ, ইন্দ্রজিৎ, সীতা এবং প্রমীলার—চরিত্রের শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব, মহত্ত্ব ও বিশেষত্ব মহান্ভাবে প্রকাশিত হইয়াছে। ঐক্য-সম্বন্ধে বিচার করিলে আমরা দেখি যে প্রত্যেক সর্গের ঘটনাবলীর সঙ্গে অপর সর্গের ঘটনাবলীর একটি সুস্পষ্ট মিলন-গ্রন্থি রহিয়াছে।

সূক্ষ্মভাবে বিচার করিলে দেখা যায় “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্য” শুধু মহাকাব্য নহে, ইহা বাংলার প্রথম এবং সম্পূর্ণ মৌলিক মহাকাব্য। রামায়ণ-অবলম্বনে লিখিত হইলেও ইহা মূল গ্রন্থ হইতে বিভিন্ন। রামায়ণে আমরা দেখিতে পাই, সীতা উদ্ধার বর্ণনা করাই বাস্তবিকের প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য ছিল; ইন্দ্রজিৎ-বধের প্রাধান্য কম। কিন্তু এই কাব্যের নামকরণ হইতে বুঝা যায়, সীতা-উদ্ধার গৌণ—মেঘনাদ-বধের বর্ণনা করাই কবির মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য। মেঘনাদের চরিত্র-গৌরব ও বীরত্ব-বর্ণনাকে কবি অধিক প্রাধান্য দিয়াছেন, শুধু বিষয়বস্তুটি সম্পূর্ণ বিভিন্নরূপে বর্ণিত

হওয়ার জন্মই “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্য” বাংলার মৌলিক মহাকাব্য বলিয়া অভিহিত হয় নাই। চরিত্র-গঠন বিশ্লেষণ করিলেও দেখা যায়, কবিবর রাক্ষসবুলকে শৌর্যো, বীর্যো, সৌন্দর্যো রাম ও লক্ষ্মণ হইতে শ্রেষ্ঠতর করিয়া ফুটাইয়াছেন।

প্রমীলা সর্বগুণসমষ্টি—তঁাহার কাব্য-কাননের শ্রেষ্ঠ কুসুম। তিনি প্রমীলার চরিত্রে কোমলতা, পাতিব্রত্যা এবং বীরোচিত ভাবের একত্র সন্নিবেশ করিয়া তঁাহার মানসী মূর্তিকে চিত্রিত করিয়াছেন। এক কথায় প্রমীলার চরিত্র বুদ্ধিতে হইলে বলা যায় যে, তিনি বজ্রাদপি কঠোর এবং কুসুমাদপি কোমল। প্রমোদ-কাননে যঁাহাকে আমরা পতির হান্সুময়ী ক্রীড়াসঙ্গিনীরূপে দেখিতে পাই, তঁাহাকেই আবার পরক্ষণে বিষাদময়ী বিরহিণীরূপে দেখি। ভাবী বিপদের আশঙ্কায় ভীতা সন্তস্তা বিরহ-বিধুরা নারী সূর্য্যপ্রাণা সূর্য্যমুখীর নিকট যাইয়া অন্তরের আবেদন জানাইয়াছেন,

“যে রবির ছবি পানে চাহি বাঁচি আমি
অহরহঃ, অন্তাচলে আচ্ছন্ন লো তিনি
আর কি পাইব আমি (উষার প্রসাদে
পাইবি যেমতি, সতি, তুই) প্রাণেশ্বরে!”

—(তৃতীয় সর্গ)

রাঘব সৈন্য-শিবিরে প্রমীলার বীরত্বব্যঞ্জক বাণী শুনিয়া স্তম্ভিত হইতে হয়। সেই আদর্শ কুলবধুর কোমলতা, ব্যাকুলতা কোথায়! তঁাহাকে সেই অশ্রুসিক্তা পতিবিরহে কাতরা প্রমীলা বলিয়া মনে হয় না; জ্বলন্ত পাবকশিখার ন্যায় উগ্রমূর্তিতে তিনি সখী বাসন্তীকে বলিতেছেন,—

“কি কহিলি, বাসন্তি! পর্বত-গৃহ ছাড়ি
বাহিরায় যবে নদী সিঞ্চুর উদ্দেশে,
কার হেন সাধ্য যে সে রোধে তার গতি!
দানব-নন্দিনী আমি, রক্ষঃ-কুল-বধু;
রাবণ শশুর মম, মেঘনাদ স্বামী—
আমি কি ডরাই, সখি, ভিখারী রাঘবে!
পশিব লঙ্কায় আজি নিজ ভুজবলে;
দেখিব কেমনে মোরে নিবারে নৃমণি!”

—(তৃতীয় সর্গ)

আবার কখনও কবি কোমল মধুরস্বভাবা কুলবধূর আদর্শে তাঁহাকে চিত্রিত করিয়াছেন। মধুসূদন করুণ শান্তিরসের সঙ্গে বীররসের একত্র সন্নিবেশ করিয়া অপূর্ব নৈপুণ্য দেখাইয়াছেন। প্রমীলা-চরিত্রের পরিকল্পনায় মধুসূদনের মৌলিকতার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। ইহার মধ্যে রণরঞ্জিণী বীরাজনা ও কুসুম-কোমলা কুলবধূর সমন্বয় হইয়াছে। দাস্তিকা ভৈরবীরূপিণী প্রমীলাকে যখন আবার স্বশ্রুত ভয়ে ভীতা শঙ্কিতা দেখি তখন চরিত্র-চিত্রণে কবির অসাধারণ প্রতিভার পরিচয়ে আমরা বিস্মিত ও আনন্দিত হই। সাহিত্য-জগতে প্রমীলার চরিত্র অপূর্ব এবং অতুলনীয়। মেঘনাদের জননী ও পত্নীর নিকট বিদায় লইয়া যজ্ঞশালায় যাইবার কালে প্রমীলার কাতরোক্তি ক্ষত্রিয়-রমণীর গায়ই হইয়াছে।

“হায় নাথ * * *

ভেবেছিছু যজ্ঞগৃহে যাব তব সাথে ;

সাজাইব বীরসাজে তোমায়। কি করি !

বন্দা করি স্বমন্দিরে রাখিলা শাশুড়ী।

রহিতে নারিছু তবু পুনঃ নাহি হেরি

পদযুগ !”

—(পঞ্চম সর্গ)

এইখানে কবির মহাকাব্যোচিত কাব্য-সৌন্দর্য ও রস-মাধুর্য দেখিতে পাই। “মেঘনাদ-বধ কাব্য” যেমন কবির মৌলিক মহাকাব্য, সেইরূপ প্রমীলা তাঁহার কাব্য-কাননের মধুরতম কুসুম। আর্য্যনারীগণের গায় প্রমীলা ভগবতীর উপাসিকা। স্বামীর কল্যাণের জন্ত তিনি শক্তির আরাধনা করিয়াছেন। যখন মেঘনাদ নিকুন্তিলা যজ্ঞে যাইবার জন্ত বিদায় লইয়া গেলেন, পতির মঙ্গলার্থে তিনি তখন ভগবতীর নিকট কাতর প্রার্থনা জানাইতেছেন,

“প্রমীলা তোমার দাসী, নগেন্দ্রনন্দিনি,

সাধে তোমা, কৃপা-দৃষ্টি কর লক্ষা পানে,

কৃপাময়ি ! রক্ষঃশ্রেষ্ঠে রক্ষ এ বিগ্রহে !

অভেদ কবচ রূপে আঁবর শূরেরে !

যে ব্রততী সদা, সতি, তোমারি আশ্রিত,

জীবন তাহার জীবে ওই তরুরাজে !

দেখ, মা, কুঠার যেন না স্পর্শে উহারে !

আর কি কহিবে দাসী ? অসুখ্যামী তুমি !
তোমা বিনা, জগদন্বে, কে আর রাখিবে ?”

—(পঞ্চম সর্গ)

সাম্বীর কাতর প্রার্থনা পূর্ণ হয় নাই। স্বামীর অকালমৃত্যুতে তিনি অবলম্বনহীনা আশ্রয়চ্যুতা লতিকার ন্যায় ভূতলে পতিত হইলেন। শ্মশানে স্বামীর সহিত তিনি এক চিতায় সহযুতা হইলেন। এই সর্গে কবির করুণরসের ধারা উৎসারিত করিয়া দিয়াছেন। এই অংশটি কাব্যের মধ্যে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ এবং সর্বোৎকৃষ্ট রূপে বর্ণিত হইয়াছে। প্রমীলার মর্শ্বেদী বিলাপে পাষাণেরও হৃদয় বিগলিত হয়। সখীগণের নিকট বিদায়-গ্রহণ-কালে তাঁহার করুণ আক্ষেপ পাঠক-পাঠিকাগণের অন্তরে চিরতরে অঙ্কিত রহিয়া গিয়াছে :—

“লো সহচরি, এতদিনে আজি
ফুরাইল জীবলীলা জীবলীলাহলে
আমার, ফিরিয়া সবে যাও দৈত্যদেশে !
কহিও পিতার পদে এ সব বারতা,
* * * * *
* * * * *
কহিও মায়েরে মোর, এ দাসীর ভালে
লিখিলা বিধাতা যাহা, তাই লো ঘটিল
এতদিনে ! যাঁর হাতে সঁপিলা দাসীরে
পিতামাতা, চলিলু লো আজি তার সাথে ;—
আর কি কহিব, সখি ? ভুল না লো তারে—
প্রমীলার এই ভিক্ষা তোমা সবা কাছে।”

—(নবম সর্গ)

প্রমীলা মধুসূদনের মৌলিক চিত্র, কিন্তু সীতা মহর্ষি বাল্মীকির অনুকরণেই চিত্রিত হইয়াছেন। রামায়ণে সীতাদেবীকে সর্বোজ্জ্বল করিয়া হইয়াছে। মহিমময়ী সীতা পবিত্রা, শুদ্ধা, সহিষ্ণুতার প্রতিমূর্তি, সর্ববৎসহা, ক্ষমাশীলা এবং হিন্দু-ললনাগণের আদর্শ-স্বরূপা নারী। তাঁহার চরিত্রে তিতিক্ষাই সর্ববাপেক্ষা প্রশংসনীয়। মাইকেল মধুসূদন সীতাদেবীকে মূল গ্রন্থ হইতে ভিন্নরূপে চিত্রিত করেন নাই। তিনি হিন্দুনারীর সনাতন আদর্শরূপেই সীতাদেবীকে

অঙ্কিত করিয়াছেন। বহু দুঃখেও কখনও তিনি রক্ষোৱাজ্ঞা রাবণের প্রতি কটুস্তি করেন নাই—অদৃষ্টের পরিহাসের জন্ত বিধাতার উপর অভিমান করিয়াছেন মাত্র। বাল্মীকির কল্পিত সীতা-চরিত্রে সামান্য ত্রুটি থাকিলেও মধুসূদন তাঁহার কাব্যে সীতাকে সর্বদ্বন্দ্বসুন্দর করিয়াছেন—“শাণ-যন্ত্র-নিশ্চুক্ত মণির স্যায় সীতাচরিত্র তাঁহার হস্তে আরও উজ্জ্বল হইয়াছে।”

প্রমীলাকে আমরা সব, রজঃ ও তমোগুণ সমন্বিত দেখিতে পাই, কিন্তু সীতাদেবী শুধু সত্ত্বগুণের আধার-স্বরূপা। তিনি শাস্ত, করুণ ও মধুর রসের উৎসরূপে চিত্রিত হইয়াছেন। একবার মাত্র কবিবর সীতাদেবীর নম্র, ধীর ও সংযত চরিত্রে কঠোরতার পরিচয় দিয়াছেন। পতি রামচন্দ্রের বিপদাশঙ্কায় ভীতা হইয়া সীতা আজন্ম নিষ্ঠাবান্ ত্রক্ষচারী লক্ষ্মণকে কঠোর বাক্যবাণে বিদ্ধ করিয়াছিলেন :—

“স্বমিত্রা শাশুড়ী মোর বড় দয়াবতী ;
কে বলে ধরিয়াছিল গর্ভে তিনি তোরে,
নিষ্ঠুর ! পাষণ দিয়া গড়িলা বিধাতা
হিয়া তোর ! ঘোর বনে নির্দয় বাঘিনী
জন্ম দিয়া পালে তোরে, বুঝি দুঃখিত !
রে ভীক, রে বীরকুলধানি, যাব আমি,
দেখিব করুণ স্বরে কে স্মরে আমারে
দূর বনে ?”

—(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

এইখানে সীতার অতুলনীয় সহিষ্ণুতার হ্রাস দেখা গেলেও এই কঠোরতা তাঁহার চরিত্রের মাধুর্য্য পরিবর্দ্ধিত করিয়াছে। “মেঘনাদবধ কাব্য”এ সীতা-দেবীকে একবার দেখিতে পাই :—

“একাকিনী শোকাকুলা, অশোক-কাননে,
কাঁদেন রাঘব-বাঞ্ছা আঁধার-কুটীরে
নীরবে ! দুঃখ চেড়ী, সতীরে ছাড়িয়া,
ফেরে দূরে মত্ত সবে উৎসব কোঁতুকে—”

—(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

ইন্দ্রজিতের অভিষেক-উৎসবে লক্ষাবাসিগণ যখন আনন্দে মগ্ন, তখন সীতাদেবী সুখদুঃখভাগিনী সরমার সহিত অতীতের সুখস্মৃতির আলাপনে ব্যাপ্ত। তিনি বলিতেছেন,

“কভু বা প্রভুর সহ ভ্রমিতাম স্থখে
নদীতটে ; দেখিতাম তরল সলিলে
নূতন গগন যেন, নব তারাবলী,
নব নিশাকান্ত-কান্তি ! কভু বা উঠিয়া
পর্বত উপরে, সখি, বসিতাম আমি
নাথের চরণতলে, ত্রুততী যেমতি
বিশাল রসাল-মূলে । কত যে আদরে
তুষিতেন প্রভু মোরে, বরষি বচন-
সুধা, হায়, কব কারে ? কব বা কেমনে ?”

—(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

পঞ্চবটীতে কিরূপ স্থখে কাল কাটাইয়াছেন, সীতা তাহারই একটু আভাস দিয়াছেন। রাজপ্রাসাদ পরিত্যাগেও তিনি কাতরা ছিলেন না। পতি-সঙ্গই তাঁহার একমাত্র সুখশাস্তি ছিল। মধুসূদন সীতা-চরিত্রের মাধুর্য্য ও শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব বিশেষ করিয়া প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন এই কথোপকথনের মধ্য দিয়া—সীতা-সরমার কথোপকথন-দৃশ্য তাঁহার সম্পূর্ণ মৌলিক চিত্র, আদি গ্রন্থে ইহা নাই। এই কাব্যে সীতাদেবীকে দুইবার মাত্র দেখা যায়। প্রথমবার ইন্দ্রজিতের অভিষেক-উৎসবের পর অশোক-কাননে, দ্বিতীয়বার ইন্দ্রজিতের মৃত্যুর পর। শেষোক্ত অংশে সীতার চরিত্রের মাহাত্ম্য আরও উজ্জ্বল হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। তাঁহারই জ্ঞান নিরপরাধ মেঘনাদ ও প্রমীলার অকাল-মৃত্যুতে তিনি অধীর হইয়া ব্যথিত করুণকণ্ঠে সরমার নিকট আক্ষেপ করিতেছেন,

“কৃষ্ণে জনম মম, সরমা রাক্ষসি !
সুখের প্রদীপ, সখি, নিবাই লো সদা
প্রবেশি যে গৃহে, হায়, অমঙ্গলা-রূপী
আমি । পোড়া ভাগ্যে এই লিখিলা বিধাতা ।”

—(নবম সর্গ)

সরমা সীতাদেবীকে নিরাভরণা দেখিয়া রক্ষোরাজকে তিরস্কার করিয়া বলিয়াছিলেন,

“নিষ্ঠুর, হায়, দুষ্ক লঙ্কাপতি !
কে ছেঁড়ে পদ্মের পর্ণ ? কেমনে হরিল
ও বরাহ অলঙ্কার, বুঝিতে না পারি।”

—(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

সীতাদেবী তদন্তরে শত্রু রক্ষোরাজকে এই বলিয়া সমর্থন করিলেন,

“বৃথা গঞ্জ দশাননে তুমি, বিধুমুখি !
আপনি খুলিয়া আমি ফেলাইনু দূরে
আভরণ, যবে পাপী আমারে ধরিল
বনান্ত্রমে।”

—(চতুর্থ সর্গ)

অত্যাচারী আততায়ী শত্রুর প্রতি এরূপ অনুকম্পা মূল রামায়ণে নাই। ইহা কবির মৌলিক কল্পনা। পূর্বেই বলিয়াছি, সীতা-সরমার কথোপকথন কবির সম্পূর্ণ নূতন সৃষ্টি। ইহা কাব্যের একটি উৎকৃষ্ট অংশ ; ইহা কাব্যের সৌন্দর্য ও গৌরব বৃদ্ধি করিয়াছে।

প্রমীলা ও সীতার চরিত্রের আলোচনার পর মেঘনাদবধ কাব্যের পুরুষ চরিত্রগুলির বিচার করা প্রয়োজন। সর্বপ্রথম রক্ষোরাজ রাবণের প্রতি আমাদের দৃষ্টি আকৃষ্ট হয়। অতুল ঐশ্বর্যের অধিকারী, ভোগবিলাসী রক্ষোরাজ পুত্রশোকে কাতর ও অবসাদগ্রস্ত। বীৰ্য্যে যিনি ত্রিভুবন জয় করিয়াছেন, দস্তে যাঁহার মস্তক চিরদিন উন্নত, তিনি পুত্রশোকে আজ মন্ত্রমুগ্ধ বিষধর সর্পের স্থায় নস্ত্রশির। তাঁহার নয়নে অবিরল অশ্রুধারা বহিতেছে ; দুর্বিষহ বেদনায় শোকতপ্ত বক্ষ বিদীর্ণ করিয়া অহরহঃ দীর্ঘনিঃশ্বাস পড়িতেছে। এই দৃশ্যে কবির রক্ষোরাজের একটি অতি করুণ চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন। পুত্রের অকাল-মৃত্যু প্রথমে তাঁহার নিকটে অবিশ্বাস্ত এবং অসম্ভব বলিয়াই মনে হইয়াছিল, তাই পুত্র বীরবাহুর মৃত্যুসংবাদ শুনিয়া তিনি বলিয়াছেন,

“ফুলদল দিয়া কাটিলা কি বিধাতা
শাল্মলী তরুণেরে !”

—(প্রথম সর্গ)

কিন্তু অল্প সময়ের মধ্যেই তাঁহার এই ভ্রান্তি দূর হইয়া গেল। তিনি বুঝিতে পারিলেন যে তাঁহার আত্মকৃত পাপের জন্য এই অশেষ দুঃখ তাঁহাকে ভোগ করিতে হইতেছে। পুত্রের অকাল-মৃত্যুর জন্য নিজেকে দায়ী বুঝিতে পারিয়া অপরিসীম বেদনায় এবং অনুশোচনায় রক্ষোরাজ দগ্ধ হইতে লাগিলেন। তাঁহার চির-ঐশ্বর্যশালিনী লক্ষাপুরী শ্মশানে পরিণত হইয়াছে। সংসারের সকল প্রিয়বস্তু একে একে ছায়াবাজির ন্যায় শূন্যে বিলীন হইয়া যাইতেছে। রক্ষোরাজের প্রচণ্ড মহাশক্তি যেন হারাইয়া গিয়াছে। অসহায় রাবণ আক্ষেপ করিয়াছেন,

“* * * কে আর রাখিবে
এ বিপুল কুলমান এ কাল-সমরে !
বনের মাঝারে যথা শাখাদলে আগে
একে একে কাঠুরিয়া কাটি, অবশেষে
নাশে বৃক্ষে, হে বিধাতঃ, এ দুরন্ত রিপু
তেমতি দুর্বল, দেখ, করিছে আমারে
নিরস্তর ! হব আমি নিস্কূল সগূলে
এর শরে !”

—(প্রথম সর্গ)

এখানে মধুসূদন রক্ষোরাজের মনের খেদ কল্পনার বর্ণনাগে সুন্দরভাবে ফুটাইয়া তুলিয়াছেন। রাবণকে আমরা পাষণ্ড, দুর্দ্রব এবং অত্যাচারী রূপে দেখিতে পাই না। তাঁহার হৃদয়ে সঁঝা ও লালসার পরিবর্তে স্নেহের মন্দাকিনী-ধারা প্রবাহিত। তাহার মধ্যে স্নেহপ্রবণ, পুত্রবৎসল শোকদীর্ণ জনকেরই প্রতিচ্ছবি দেখিতে পাই। মূল রামায়ণে রাবণকে নরমাংসাশী রাক্ষসরূপে কল্পনা করা হইয়াছে। এখানে তিনি প্রাণপ্রিয় পুত্রের মৃত্যুর কথা ভাবিয়া ব্যথিত। পুত্রের অন্তিমশয্যা দেখিবার তীব্র আকাঙ্ক্ষা স্নেহপরায়ণ পিতার উপযুক্তই হইয়াছে। মহাসমুদ্রের উপর সেতু দেখিতে পাইয়া তাঁহার আত্মাভিমান আহত হইয়াছিল, তাই তিনি ব্যঙ্গোক্তি করিয়া বলিয়াছেন,

“কি সুন্দর মালা আজি পরিয়াছ গলে,
প্রচেষ্টা ! হা দিক্, ওহে জলদলপতি !

এই কি সাজে তোমারে, অলঙ্ঘ্য, অজ্ঞেয়
তুমি ? হায়, এই কিহে তোমার ভূষণ,
রত্নাকর ? কোন্ গুণে, কহ, দেব, শুনি,
কোন্ গুণে দাশরথি কিনেছে তোমারে !”

—(প্রথম সর্গ)

তিনি রণক্ষেত্রে পুত্রের অস্তিমশয়া দেখিয়া বলিয়াছেন,

“যে শয্যায় আজি তুমি শুয়েছ, কুমার
প্রিয়তম, বীরকুল-সাধ এ শয়নে
সদা ! রিপুদলবলে দলিয়া সমরে,
জন্মভূমি-রক্ষা হেতু কে ডরে মরিতে ?”

—(প্রথম সর্গ)

পরক্ষণেই রক্ষোরাজ প্রাণাধিক পুত্রের মৃত্যুর কথা স্মরণ করিয়া অশ্রুঝর-
কণ্ঠে বলিয়া উঠিলেন,

“হে বিধি, এ ভবভূমি তব লীলাস্থলী ;
পরের যাতনা কিন্তু দেখি কি হে তুমি
হও সুখী ! পিতা সদা পুত্র-দুঃখে দুঃখী—
তুমি হে জগৎপিতা, এ কি রীতি তব ?
হা পুত্র, হা বীরবাহ ! বীরেন্দ্র-কেশরি !
কেমনে ধরিব প্রাণ তোমার বিহনে ?”

—(প্রথম সর্গ)

রক্ষোরাজের চিন্তের পূর্ব দৃঢ়তা ক্রমশঃ শিথিল হইয়া পড়িয়াছে, তাই
ইন্দ্রজিৎকে যুদ্ধে পাঠাইতে তাঁহার দুর্বল চিন্ত বারবার শঙ্কিত হইয়া
পড়িতেছিল। লঙ্কাপুরীর আর কোনও বীরের উপর তাঁহার আস্থা ছিল না।
তিনি বলিয়াছেন,

“রাক্ষস-কুল-শেখর তুমি, বৎস ; তুমি
রাক্ষস-কুল-ভরসা। এ কাল-সমরে,
নাহি চাহে প্রাণ মম পাঠাইতে তোমা
বারংবার।

—(প্রথম সর্গ)

পুত্রের একান্ত অনুরোধে, তিনি অবশেষে ভগবদ্রূপার উপর বিশ্বাস করিয়া মেঘনাদকে যুদ্ধে পাঠাইতে স্বীকৃত হইলেন ; কিন্তু যুদ্ধে যাইবার পূর্বের তাঁহাকে বলিলেন,

“* * * আগে পূজ ইক্ষদেবে,—
নিকুস্তিলা-যজ্ঞ সাজ কর, বীরমণি !
সেনাপতি পদে আমি বরিনু তোমারে।”

—(প্রথম সর্গ)

মেঘনাদের মৃত্যু-সংবাদ ধীরে ধীরে লঙ্কাবাসিগণ শুনিল এবং প্রত্যেকটি প্রাণী স্তম্ভিত হইয়া গেল। যখন সমগ্র লঙ্কাপুরী শোকসাগরে নিমগ্ন, তখনও আমরা দেখিতে পাই, রক্ষোবাজ স্থির ও নীরব। বীরবাহুর মৃত্যুতে তিনি অধীর হইয়া বালকের মত অশ্রুবর্ষণ করিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু জ্যেষ্ঠপুত্রের মৃত্যুতে তিনি একবিন্দু অশ্রুও বর্ষণ করিলেন না। পুত্রের মৃত্যুতে দশাননের নয়নাশ্রু শুকাইয়া গিয়াছে, তাঁহার বক্ষের সমস্ত অস্থি বেদনায় বিশীর্ণ হইয়া গিয়াছে, শুষ্ক নির্গিমেষ নেত্রে কিয়ৎকাল নিস্তরু থাকিবার পর তাঁহার সংজ্ঞা লোপ হইল। সম্বৎ ফিরিয়া আসিলে, তিনি সম্মুখে ইক্ষদেব ত্রিশূল-পাণির দর্শন পাইয়া তাঁহার চরণতলে পতিত হইলেন, কৃতাপ্তলিপুটে বলিলেন,

“* * * এতদিনে, প্রভু,
ভাগ্যহীন ভৃত্যে এবে পড়িল কি মনে
তোমার ! এ মায়া, হায়, কেমনে বুঝিব
মূঢ় আমি, মায়াময় ? কিন্তু অগ্রে পালি
আজ্ঞা তব, হে সর্বজ্ঞ ; পরে নিবেদিব
যা কিছু আছে এ মনে ও রাজীবপদে।”

—(সপ্তম সর্গ)

কবি মধুসূদন এইখানে দশাননের অবিচল ভগবন্তক্তির জ্বলন্ত দৃষ্টান্ত দেখাইয়াছেন। পুত্রহন্তার প্রতি প্রতিহিংসার অনল জলিয়া উঠিল। এক মহাশক্তির বলে বলীয়ান হইয়া তিনি স্বয়ং রণসজ্জায় সজ্জিত হইতে লাগিলেন। লঙ্কার সমগ্র সৈন্যদল প্রস্তুত হইল। তাহাদের পদক্ষেপে

লঙ্কাপুরী টলিয়া উঠিল। রক্ষোরাজ মদমত্ত হস্তীর গায় উন্মত্ত; রণক্ষেত্রে পুত্রহত্যার প্রতিহিংসায় তাঁহার পুঞ্জশোকের উপশম হইবে মনে করিয়া বলিলেন,

“* * * রণরঙ্গে ডুলিব এ জ্বালা—
এ বিষম জ্বালা যদি পারি রে ডুলিতে।”

—(সপ্তম সর্গ)

পুত্রহত্যাকারী লক্ষ্মণকে যুদ্ধক্ষেত্রে দেখিতে পাইয়া ত্রিভুবন-জয়ী রাবণ বলিয়া উঠিলেন,

“এতক্ষণে, রে লক্ষ্মণ, * * *
* এ রণক্ষেত্রে পাইনু কি তোরে নরাদম ?
* * * * * কে তোরে
* * * * *
রক্ষিবে পামর, আজি ? এ আসন্নকালে
স্রমিত্রা জননী তোর, কলত্র উর্শ্মিলা,
ভাব দৌছে !—মাংস তোর মাংসাহারী জীবে
দিব এবে ; * * *
পাশিলি রাক্ষসালয়ে চোর বেশ ধরি,
হরিলি রাক্ষস-রত্ন—অমূল্য জগতে।”

—(সপ্তম সর্গ)

রাবণের রক্তলোলুপ অস্ত্রের আঘাতে লক্ষ্মণ ভূতলে পতিত হইলেন। রক্ষোরাজ পুত্রহত্যার প্রতিহিংসা চরিতার্থ করিয়া লঙ্কায় প্রত্যাগমন করিলেন। মধুসূদন এই অংশে বীররসের অবতারণা করিয়া রাবণের চরিত্রের বৈশিষ্ট্য ফুটাইয়া তুলিয়াছেন। পূর্বেই বলিয়াছি, রাবণ আত্মকৃত কর্মের জ্ঞান অনুতপ্ত। ভ্রান্তি অপনোদন করিবার পথ রুদ্ধ হইয়া গিয়াছে। তাই তিনি কখনও শোকে অধীর, কখনও ক্রোধে উন্মত্ত, কখনও ঘৃণায় কুঞ্চিতনাশা, কখনও তীব্র অভিমানে ক্ষুব্ধ, আবার কখনও বা অদৃষ্টের বিড়ম্বনায় নতশির। একসঙ্গে সর্বপ্রকার রসমাধুর্যের সম্মিলন করিয়া মধুসূদন তাঁহার বর্ণনা-নৈপুণ্যের পরিচয় দিয়াছেন। এই কাব্যের নবম সর্গে কবি করুণরসের প্রাচুর্য্য

ফুটাইয়াছেন। মেঘনাদ ও প্রমীলার চিতানল দেখিয়া সমগ্র লঙ্কাবাসির হাহাকারে শ্মশানভূমি যখন প্রতিধ্বনিত, রক্ষোবাজ তখন নিশ্চল পাষণ-মূর্তির স্থায় পার্শ্বে দণ্ডায়মান। পুত্রবধূ প্রমীলার বিদায়-সস্তাষণে তাঁহার সম্বিৎ ফিরিয়া আসিল। পুত্রবধূর বিদায়বাণী রক্ষোবাজের নিকট রণক্ষেত্রের শাগিত শব্দ অপেক্ষা তীক্ষ্ণ মনে হইল। তাঁহার নিজের জ্ঞাত নিরপরাধ সন্তানের অকালমৃত্যু তাঁহার হৃদয়ে শক্তিশেলের স্থায় বিদ্য হইল। তিনি পুত্র ও পুত্রবধূকে সজ্জনমনে আশীর্বাদ করিলেন, কিন্তু হৃদয়ের দৌর্বল্য আর অতিক্রম করিতে পারিলেন না। পৌরুষের ভিতর দিয়া রক্ষোবাজের চির অন্তর্নিহিত অপত্যস্নেহ প্রকাশ পাইল। তখন তাঁহার আত্মসংযমের শক্তি ছিল না, তিনি ধীরে ধীরে পুত্র ও পুত্রবধূর চিতার নিকট অগ্রসর হইয়া বলিলেন,

“ছিল আশা, মেঘনাদ, মুদিব অস্ত্রমে
এ নয়নদ্বয় আমি তোমার সম্মুখে!—
সঁপি রাজ্যভার, পুত্র, তোমায়, করিব
মহাযাত্রা!” * * *
* * * * *

“ছিল আশা, রক্ষঃকুল-রাজসিংহাসনে
জুড়াইব আঁখি, বৎস, দেখিয়া তোমারে,
বামে রক্ষঃকুললক্ষ্মী রক্ষোরাণীরূপে
পুত্রবধূ! বৃথা আশা! পূর্বজন্ম-ফলে,
হেরি তোমা দৌহে আজি এ কাল-আসনে!
কর্ব্বর-গোরব-রবি চির-রাহগ্রাসে!
সেবিষু শিবেরে আমি বহু যত্ন করি,
লভিতে কি এই ফল?”

—(নবম সর্গ)

পিতৃস্নেহের অতি সূক্ষ্ম ও গভীর বিশ্লেষণে এই বর্ণনা অপরূপ হইয়াছে। পিতৃস্নেহের অতি সূক্ষ্মতম স্ফুরণ কবি গভীরভাবে ব্যক্ত করিয়াছেন। রাক্ষস-কুলের প্রতি মধুসূদনের সহানুভূতি সম্পূর্ণ সার্থক হইয়াছে। যে কেহ এই কাব্য

শ্রীমতী নীহার দাশগুপ্তা

পাঠ করিবে সে-ই দশানন রাবণের দুঃখে ব্যথিত হইবে এবং সমবেদনা অনুভব করিবে।

মধুসূদন মেঘনাদকে তাঁহার কাব্যের নায়করূপে চিত্রিত করিয়াছেন। তাই মেঘনাদের নামানুসারেই কাব্যের নামকরণ হইয়াছে। রক্ষোরাজ রাবণ ও তৎপুত্র মেঘনাদের চরিত্রের মধ্যে বহু পার্থক্য দেখা যায় সত্য, কিন্তু কবি উভয়কেই বীর, নির্ভীক, দান্তিক ও ঐশ্বর্য্য-বিলাসী করিয়াছেন। পার্থক্যের প্রতি লক্ষ্য করিলে দেখা যায়, রক্ষোরাজ শোকে-দুঃখে ত্রিয়মাণ ও ক্লান্তকায়, কিন্তু মেঘনাদ অসাধারণ বীরত্বের প্রতিমূর্ত্তি। যখন মেঘনাদ প্রমোদোচ্ছানে পত্নী প্রমীলা ও তাঁহার সখীগণের সহিত প্রমোদক্রীড়ায় ব্যাপ্ত ছিলেন তখন ধাত্রীর মুখে ভ্রাতা বীরবাহুর মৃত্যুসংবাদে বিন্মিত হইলেন। তিনি ধাত্রীকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন,

“* * * কে বধিল কবে
প্রিয়ানুজে ?”

— (প্রথম সর্গ)

বীরবাহুর অকালমৃত্যুর বৃত্তান্ত শুনিয়া ইন্দ্রজিতের স্বীয় সুখভোগের উপর ঘৃণা হইল। তিনি আত্মগ্লানিতে, ক্রোড়ে ও লজ্জায় আপনাকে বারংবার ধিক্কার দিতে লাগিলেন।

“* * * হা ধিক্ মোরে ! বৈরিদল বেড়ে
স্বর্ণলক্ষা, হেথা আমি বামাদল-মাঝে ?
এই কি সাজে আমারে, দশাননাত্মজ
আমি ইন্দ্রজিৎ ; আন রথ স্বরা করি ;
যুগাব এ অপবাদ, বধি রিপুকুলে।”

— (১ম সর্গ)

ইন্দ্রজিতের চরিত্রে ভীতি, আশঙ্কা বা উদ্বেগের লেশমাত্রও নাই। জীবনে নিরাশা ও দুঃখের সঙ্গে তাঁহার পরিচয় ছিল না বলিয়াই তিনি মাতার আশঙ্কাকে হাস্যাস্পদ মনে করিয়া বলিয়াছেন,

“* * * কি হেতু
সভয় হইলা আজি, কহ, মা, আমারে ?
কি ছার সে রাম, তারে ডরাও আপনি ?”

“* * *
 * * * হেন কুলে কালি
 দিব কি রাখবে দিতে, আমি, মা, রাখিণি
 ইন্দ্রজিৎ ? কি কহিবে, শুনিলে একথা
 মাতামহ দনুজেন্দ্র ময় ? রথা যত
 মাতুল ? হাসিবে বিশ্ব ! আদেশ দাসেরে
 যাইব সমরে, মাতঃ, নাশিব রাখবে।”
 * * *

“আপন মন্দিরে, দেবি, যাও ফিরে এবে।
 স্বরায় আসিয়া আমি পূজিব যতনে
 ও পদ-রাজীব-যুগ, সমর-বিজয়ী !”

— (পঞ্চম সর্গ)

মেঘনাদ স্বদেশবৎসল, কর্তৃবানিষ্ঠ, ধার্মিক এবং পিতৃমাতৃভক্ত বীর ছিলেন। পিতামাতার চরণবন্দনা করিয়া তিনি যজ্ঞশালায় গমন করিলেন। তাঁহার দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস ছিল যে মাতার আশীর্বাদই তাঁহাকে সর্বক্ষেত্রে অজয় করিবে এবং উহাই তাঁহার জীবনের একমাত্র রক্ষাকবচ। তিনি মাতাকে বলিয়াছেন,

“পাইয়াছি পিতৃ-আজ্ঞা, দেহ আজ্ঞা তুমি।
 কে আঁটিবে দাসে, দেবি, তুমি আশীষিলে ?”

— (পঞ্চম সর্গ)

তাঁহার চরিত্রে অবিচল দেব-ভক্তির পরাকাষ্ঠা দেখা যায় যখন নিকুন্তিলা যজ্ঞাগারে তিনি একনিষ্ঠ সাধকের হ্রায় ইষ্টদেবের আরাধনায় নিমগ্ন। সকল ভুলিয়া তিনি একাগ্রচিত্তে ইষ্টদেবের মূর্তি কল্পনা করিতেছিলেন; লক্ষ্মণকে দেখিয়া ধ্যানমগ্ন পূজারী ইষ্টদেব ভ্রমে শত্রুকেই প্রণিপাত করিয়া অভিলষিত বর প্রার্থনা করিলেন,

“* * * বর, প্রভু, দেহ এ কিঙ্করে,
 নিঃশঙ্কা করিব লক্ষ্য বধিয়া রাখবে
 আজি—”

— (ষষ্ঠ সর্গ)

কিন্তু তাঁহার এই ভ্রান্তি অধিকক্ষণ স্থায়ী হইল না, ভ্রান্তি অপনোদনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আত্মাভিমান জাগিয়া উঠিল। প্রকৃত ক্ষাত্তধর্মী বীরের ম্যায় পরুষ কণ্ঠে বলিলেন,

“সত্য যদি রামানুজ তুমি, ভীমবাহু
লক্ষ্মণ ; সংগ্রাম-সাধ অবশ্য মিটাব
মহাহবে আমি তব, বিরত কি কভু
রণরঙ্গে ইন্দ্রজিৎ ? আতিথেয় সেবা,
তিষ্ঠি, লহ, শূরশ্রেষ্ঠ, প্রথমে এ ধামে—
রক্ষোরিপু তুমি, তবু অতিথি হে এবে।”

—(ষষ্ঠ সর্গ)

মেঘনাদের চরিত্রে অসীম সাহসিকতা এবং নির্ভীকতার সঙ্গে বীরোচিত শিষ্টাচারের সামঞ্জস্য প্রশংসারযোগ্য। এইখানে তাঁহার আত্মমর্যাদাবোধেরও মাধুর্য্য সমধিক স্ফূর্তি পাইয়াছে। দর্পী ইন্দ্রজিৎ লক্ষ্মণকে তৃণবৎ জ্ঞান করিতেন, কিন্তু নিরস্ত্র নিঃসহায় হইয়া তাঁহারই নিকট সময় ভিক্ষা করিলেন। তাঁহার শেষ কাতর প্রার্থনাও লক্ষ্মণ গ্রাহ্য করিলেন না। মেঘনাদ লক্ষ্মণকে শাস্ত্রজ্ঞ কত্রিয় বীর মনে করিয়া বলিয়াছেন,

“* * * নিরস্ত্র যে অরি,
নহে রথিকুল-প্রথা আঘাতিতে তারে।
এ বিধি, হে বীরবর, অবিদিত নহে,
কল তুমি, তব কাছে ;—”

---(ষষ্ঠ সর্গ)

হীনচেতা কাপুরুষ লক্ষ্মণ দৈববলে বলীয়ান হইয়া তাঁহাকে নিহত করিলেন। বীরশ্রেষ্ঠ মেঘনাদ অন্তিম জনকজননীর পাদপদ্ম স্মরণ করিলেন ও প্রেমসী প্রমীলার নিকট মানস-বিদায় লইলেন। পত্নীর কথা মনে করিয়া তাঁহার নয়নে অবিরল অশ্রুধারা বহিতে লাগিল। বাধিতহৃদয়ে রক্ষোরাজের শ্রেষ্ঠসম্পদ ইন্দ্রজিৎ ধীরে ধীরে মহানিদ্রায় নিমগ্ন হইলেন। লঙ্কার গৌরবরবি চিরতরে অন্তমিত হইল।

একদিকে মধুসূদন যেমন রাক্ষসকুলকে শৌর্য্যে বীৰ্য্যে উন্নত করিয়াছেন, অপরদিকে ভেমনি রাম-লক্ষ্মণের মধ্যে ভীরুতা, কাপুরুষতা এবং হীনতার চিত্র

আঁকিয়াছেন। রামের স্বভাবে কোমলতার অভাব নাই সত্য, কিন্তু ভীৰুতা ক্ষত্রিয় বীরের উপযুক্ত হয় নাই। পুরুষের পৌরুষ, ক্ষত্রিয়ের বীরত্ব ও মনুষ্যের মনুষ্যত্ব ইঁহার চরিত্রে কবির দেখিতে পান নাই। কিন্তু তিনি ভ্রাতৃবৎসল ও বিনয়া। প্রমীলার যুদ্ধাভিলাষ দেখিয়া রাম বলিয়াছেন,

“* * * শুন স্নকেশিনি !
বিবাদ না করি আমি কভু অকারণে।
অরি মম রক্ষঃপতি ; তোমরা সকলে
কুলবালা, কুলবধু ; কোন্ অপরাধে
বৈরিভাব আচরিব তোমাদের সাথে ?
আনন্দে প্রবেশ লক্ষা নিঃশঙ্ক-হৃদয়ে।”

—(তৃতীয় সর্গ)

এই অংশে রামচন্দ্রকে বিনয় ও শিষ্টাচারের সুন্দর আদর্শরূপে দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। তিনি উদার ও মহান, কিন্তু তিনি প্রমীলার দূতী সম্পর্কে যে উক্তি করিলেন তাহা তাঁহার হৃদয়ে ভয়ের আভাস দেয়।

“দূতীর আকৃতি দেখি ডরিনু হৃদয়ে,
রক্ষোবর ! যুদ্ধ-সাধ ত্যজিনু তখনি !
মুঢ় যে ঘাঁটিয়, সখে, হেন বাঘিনীরে ;”

—(৩য় সর্গ)

রামচন্দ্রের হৃদয়ের মহত্ত্ব ফুটিয়া উঠিয়াছে যখন তিনি প্রমীলার দূতীকে বলিলেন,

“কহ তাঁবে শতমুখে বাখানি, ললনে,
তাঁর পতিভক্তি আমি, শক্তি, বীরপণা --
বিনা রণে পরিহার মাগি তাঁর কাছে !”

* * * *

“ভিখারী রাঘব দূতি, বিদিত জগতে ;
বন-বাসী, ধন-হীন বিধি বিড়ম্বনে ;
কি প্রসাদ সুবদনে, (সাজে যা তোমারে)
দিব আজি ? সুখে থাক. আশীর্বাদ করি !”

—(৩য় সর্গ)

রামচন্দ্রের হৃদয়ের দুর্বলতা অধিক পরিমাণে পরিস্ফুট হইয়াছে, যখন বিভীষণের সঙ্গে লক্ষ্মণ ইন্দ্রজিৎকে বধ করিতে লঙ্কাপুরীতে গমন করিলেন। ত্রীলোকের স্তায় ক্রন্দন ক্ষত্রিয়ের ধর্ম্য নহে। অথচ তিনি ক্রন্দন-জড়িত স্বরে বিভীষণকে বলিয়াছেন,

“সাবধানে যাও, মিত্র ! অমূল্য রতনে
রামের, ভিখারী রাম অর্পিছে তোমারে,
রথিবর ! নাহি কাজ বৃথা বাক্যব্যয়ে ;—
জীবন, মরণ মম আজি তব হাতে ।”

—(ষষ্ঠ সর্গ)

এই কয় ছত্রে রামের চরিত্রের দুর্বলতার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। রণক্ষেত্রে রাক্ষাসাজের ব্যাপোক্তি সহ করিয়া পৃষ্ঠপ্রদর্শন করিয়া তিনি পুনরায় কাপুরুষতার পরিচয় দিয়াছেন।

“* * * না চাহি তোমারে
আজি, হে বৈদেহীনাথ ! এ ভব-মণ্ডলে
আর একদিন তুমি জীব নিরাপদে ।
কোথা সে অনুজ তব কপটসমরী
পামর ? মারিব তারে ; যাও ফিরি তুমি
শিবিরে, রাখবশ্রেষ্ঠ !”

—(৭ম সর্গ)

রামচন্দ্র পৃষ্ঠপ্রদর্শন করিয়া চলিয়া গেলেন, ইহা বীরোচিত নহে। যিনি শক্তিতে অজেয়, হরধনু ভঙ্গ করিয়া যিনি পৃথিবীতে অক্ষয়কীর্তি লাভ করিয়াছেন, তিনি সম্মুখসমরে শত্রুর ভয়ে প্রস্থান করিলেন ! রামচন্দ্রের চরিত্রের এইরূপ বিকৃতির মূলে রহিয়াছে রাক্ষসকুলের প্রতি মধুসূদনের অত্যধিক সহানুভূতি ও শ্রদ্ধা। সত্ত্বগুণের আধার রামচন্দ্রের হৃদয়ে বল ও দৃঢ়তার অভাব হান্ত্যাস্পদ বলিয়া মনে হয়।

লক্ষ্মণের চরিত্র বিশ্লেষণ করিলে দেখা যায়, কবি মধুসূদন হীনতার কদর্যা চিত্র আঁকিতে প্রয়াস পাইয়াছেন। লক্ষ্মণের সকল প্রকার কার্য্যই হীনচিত্তের পরিচয় দেয়। দেবমায়্যা-বলে নিরস্ত্র মেঘনাদকে বধ করা যেমন নীচ, তক্ষরের

স্তায় যজ্ঞাগারে প্রবেশ করা ততোধিক হীন। অস্থায়ভাবে মেঘনাদকে নিহত করা ক্ষত্রিয়ের ধর্ম্য নহে। ধর্ম্মাধর্ম্মজ্ঞান তাঁহার ছিল না। তাই তিনি বলিতে পারিয়াছেন,

“মারি অরি পারি যে কোশলে।”

রণক্ষেত্রে রাবণের ব্যঙ্গোক্তি উপযুক্ত উত্তর প্রদান করিয়া লক্ষ্মণ একবার মাত্র বীরত্বের মর্যাদা দেখাইয়াছেন।

“কল্পকুলে জন্ম মম, রক্ষঃকুলপতি,
নাহি ডরি যমে আমি ; কেন ডরাইব
তোমায় ? আকুল তুমি পুত্রশোকে আজি,
যথাসাধ্য কর, রথি ; আশু নিবারিব
শোক তব, প্রেরি তোমা পুত্রবর যথা।”

—(৭ম সর্গ)

সমস্ত কাব্যখানিতে এই প্রথম লক্ষ্মণের বীরত্ব দেখা যায়। রামচন্দ্রের বাক্যে ও কার্যে ক্ষত্রোচিত মহিমা কোথাও নাই। রাম ও লক্ষ্মণের এই দুর্বলতা ও হীনতা ভারতীয় আদর্শের সঙ্গে সুসমঞ্জস নহে। এই দিক দিয়া বিচার করিলে “মেঘনাদবধ” প্রকৃত মহাকাব্য বলিয়া গণ্য হইতে পারে না। বিদেশীয় সংস্কৃতির প্রেরণায় মধুসূদন স্বদেশের আদর্শের প্রতি অবিচার করিয়াছেন।

মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্য ছন্দঃসৌন্দর্য্যে, ভাষার লালিত্যে, রসপ্রাচুর্য্যে এবং ভাবগাভীর্য্যে অতুলনীয়। যদিও মূল রামায়ণ হইতে মধুসূদন ইহার বিষয়বস্তু গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন, তথাপি তিনি ইহাতে যে ভাষা এবং ছন্দের সন্নিবেশ করিয়াছেন, তাহাতে বাংলার জাতীয় সাহিত্যের গৌরব বৃদ্ধি পাইয়াছে। মাইকেল মধুসূদন তাঁহার কাব্যে আদিরসের অবতারণা করেন নাই বলিলেই চলে ; শুধু বীররস ও করুণরসের দ্বারা বিষয়বস্তুটির সৌন্দর্য্যের ও মাধুর্য্যের বিকাশ করিয়াছেন। সূক্ষ্ম বিচার করিলে মনে হইতে পারে, কাব্যখানিতে কবি বীররস অপেক্ষা করুণরসের প্রাধান্য দিয়াছেন। কিন্তু ইহা স্বীকার করিতেই হইবে, এবং ইহাই মধুসূদনের শ্রেষ্ঠ কৃতিত্ব, যে তিনি বীররস ও করুণরসের অপূর্ব সমন্বয় করিয়াছেন। পুত্রশোকাতুর রাবণের বিলাপি

সাধারণ নরনারীর বিলাপের মত নহে। তাঁহার শোকোচ্ছ্বাসের মধ্যেও বীরক পরিশ্রুটি হইয়া উঠিয়াছে।

“* * * * ফুলদল দিয়া
কাটিলা কি বিধাতা শাল্যলী তরুবরে ?”

—(প্রথম সর্গ)

ইহা কোনও সাধারণ পুত্রশোকাতুর পিতার খেদোক্তি নহে, ইহার মধ্যে বীরশ্রেষ্ঠ রুকোৱাজের মনের ঐশ্বর্য্য অভিব্যক্তি পাইয়াছে। মাইকেল মধুসূদনের ভাষা কখনও অস্বরচূড়িত গিরিশঙ্করের মত উন্নত ও গম্ভীর, আবার কখনও শ্রোতস্বিনীর কলোচ্ছ্বাসের মত চিত্তহারী। কবির মেঘমন্দ্রস্বরে যেমন পাঠকের হৃদয় উদ্দীপিত ও উত্তেজিত হয়, তেমনি আবার করুণরসের ধারায় চিত্ত প্লাবিত হয়।

বর্ণনার সমৃদ্ধির জগৎ মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্য প্রসিক্তি লাভ করিয়াছে। প্রভাত ও সন্ধ্যার বর্ণনা, লক্ষাপুরী, অমরাপুরী প্রভৃতির বর্ণনা বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখযোগ্য। মধুসূদনের কল্পনা বিশাল মহনীয় বিষয়ে যেরূপ স্ফুটি পাইয়াছে, কোমল ও মধুর বিষয়েও সেইরূপ বিকাশ লাভ করিয়াছে। সপ্তম সর্গের প্রারম্ভে প্রভাতের যে বর্ণনা আছে তাহাতে প্রকৃতির শুভ্র স্নিগ্ধ মাধুর্য্য প্রকাশিত হইয়াছে।

“* * * * উল্লাসে হাসিলা
কুসুমকুসুমলা মহৌ মুক্তামালা গলে।
উৎসবে মঙ্গলবাৎস উথলে যেমতি
দেবালয়ে, উথলিল স্তম্বরলহরী
নিকুঞ্জে। বিমল জলে শোভিল নলিনী;
স্থলে সমপ্রেমাকাঙ্ক্ষী হেম সূর্য্যমুখী।”

—(৭ম সর্গ)

কোমল ও মধুর বর্ণনার মধ্যে সরমার নিকট সঁতা তাঁহার অতীতের যে চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন তাহা সর্ব্বশ্রেষ্ঠ। এই বর্ণনায় আড়ম্বর নাই, অনাবশ্যক অলঙ্কার নাই, কোনও কোভ, কোনও জ্বালা নাই—লুপ্ত অতীত সীতার স্মৃতিতে

বিচিত্র বর্ণে ও রসে সমৃদ্ধ হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। এই পূর্বকাহিনীর বর্ণনায় সীতার চিত্ত সান্ত্বনা পাইয়াছে। ইহার বর্ণনাও অতিশয় মধুর।

“বরিষার কালে, সখি, প্লাবন-পীড়নে
কাতর প্রবাহ ঢালে, তীর অতিক্রমি,
বারি-রাশি দুইপাশে ; ভেমতি যে মনঃ
দুঃখিত, দুঃখের কথা কহে সে অপরে।” —

—(৪র্থ সর্গ)

বিরাট ও মহান বিষয়ের বর্ণনায় প্রত্যেক মহাকবির কল্পনা উৎসারিত হয়। মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্যে এই জাতীয় বর্ণনার অভাব নাই। ল্যাটিন কবি ভার্জিলকে অনুসরণ করিয়া মধুসূদন প্রেতপুরীর যে বর্ণনা দিয়াছেন তাহার মহিমা অনন্তসাধারণ। কিন্তু কল্পনার ঐশ্বৰ্য্যে লঙ্কার বর্ণনা সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ। কবি লঙ্কাকে “সুবর্ণদীপমালিনী রাজেন্দ্রাণী”র সহিত তুলনা করিয়াছেন। Paradise Lost-এর প্রথম সর্গে মিল্টন নরকপুরীর (Pandemonium) যে চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন তাহাও কনক-লঙ্কার নিকট হীনপ্রভ।

অমিতাক্ষর রচনায় মধুসূদন বঙ্গসাহিত্যে অপ্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী। মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্যে তাঁহার শব্দচয়নচাতুর্য্যের প্রকৃষ্ট পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। গম্ভীর বিষয় বর্ণনার কালে তিনি ওজস্বী ও গম্ভীরনাদ শব্দের প্রয়োগ করিয়া কাব্যের মহিমা বজায় রাখিয়াছেন ; আবার শান্ত, সহজ ও মধুর বর্ণনায় স্নমধুর শব্দরাজির সন্নিবেশ করিয়া কোমল রসের অবতারণা করিতে প্রয়াস পাইয়াছেন। তাঁহার বহুমুখী প্রতিভা এবং অসাধারণ সাহিত্য-সাধনা তাঁহাকে কাব্যজগতে অমর করিয়াছে। মেঘনাদবধের শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব সম্বন্ধে এই কথা বলিলেই যথেষ্ট হইবে যে, অজস্র অনুকরণ সত্ত্বেও কি ছন্দোগৌরবে, কি ভাষামাধুর্য্যে, কি বিষয়গাম্ভীর্য্যে ইহা অপরাজিত রহিয়াছে।

অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দ

বঙ্গসাহিত্যে মধুসূদনের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ দান অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দ। সাহিত্যের পাঠকমাত্রই জানেন যে ছন্দ কল্পনার বাহন মাত্র। কল্পনাকে সংযত করিবার জন্ত নিয়মের প্রয়োজন, কিন্তু কবির লক্ষ্য স্বাধীনতা—বন্ধন নহে।

মধুসূদন শুধু মিল বা অমুপ্রাস তুলিয়া দিয়াই কাস্ত হইলেন না। তিনি দেখাইলেন যে, প্রয়োজন হইলে ছন্দঃপ্রবাহ অষ্টম অক্ষরের অথবা চতুর্দশ অক্ষরের পর যতি উপেক্ষা করিয়া তৃতীয়, ষষ্ঠ অথবা অমুরূপ সংখ্যক যতিতে বিরাম লাভ করিতে পারে। অষ্টম অথবা চতুর্দশ অক্ষরের যতি ভীষ্ণিয়া দিয়াই মধুসূদন বাংলা পয়ারের শৃঙ্খল মোচন করিয়া ছন্দকে অবাধ গতি প্রদান করিলেন। এই কারণে এই ছন্দের যথার্থ নাম হওয়া উচিত অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দ। “অমিতাক্ষর” বলিলে শুধু অন্ত্যামুপ্রাসের অভাবের উপরই জোর দেওয়া হয়। কিন্তু যথার্থভাবে দেখিলে অন্ত্যামুপ্রাসহীনতা মধুসূদনের প্রবর্তিত ছন্দের মুখ্য বিশেষত্ব নহে। মিত্রাক্ষর ছন্দের প্রতি হত্রেই কবিকে ধামিতে হয়। মহাকাব্যে যে বিস্তৃতি, নানাভাবের সামঞ্জস্য ও বর্ণনার মাধুর্য্যের প্রয়োজন তাহা মিত্রাক্ষর কাব্যে সহজলভ্য নহে। এইজন্য মিন্টনকে অমুসরণ করিয়া মাইকেল তাঁহার কাব্যে অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দের অবতারণা করেন। তিলোত্তমাসম্ভব-কাব্য বাংলায় প্রথম অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দে রচিত কাব্য বলিয়া পরিগণিত হয়। তিলোত্তমাসম্ভব কাব্যের পূর্বে কবি পদ্মাবতী নাটকে কয়েক ছত্র অমিতাক্ষরে লিখিয়াছিলেন, ইহাই অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দের প্রথম নিদর্শন।

“সুখে সদা কর বাস অবনীমণ্ডলে
পরানুভব শত্রুদলে, মিত্রকূলে পালি,
ধর্ম্মপথগামী যথা ধর্ম্মের নন্দন
পৌরব।”

—(পদ্মাবতী নাটক, পঞ্চমাক্ষ, দ্বিতীয় গর্ভাক্ষ)

অবশ্য তিলোত্তমাসম্ভব-কাব্যেই এই ছন্দ পূর্ণতর রূপ গ্রহণ করে এবং মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্যে ইহার চরম বিকাশ হয়। তিলোত্তমাসম্ভব-কাব্যে মধুসূদনের প্রতিভাস্ফুরণের পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। কিন্তু ইহা তাহার প্রথম কাব্য বলিয়া তাঁহার কল্পনা সম্পূর্ণ বন্ধনহীন হইতে পারে নাই। মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্যে সমস্ত জড়তা কাটিয়া গিয়াছে। কবি তাঁহার মহাকাব্যকে গৌরব দিব্যর জগৎ গুরুগম্ভীর সংস্কৃত শব্দের বহুল প্রয়োগ করিয়াছেন। কিন্তু ছন্দের উপর তাঁহার অধিকার এত সুনিশ্চিত যে কাব্য কোথাও ভারাক্রান্ত হয় নাই। কল্পনা স্বাধীনভাবে সঞ্চারিত হইয়াছে, তাহার আপনার প্রয়োজনে আসিয়াছে এবং আপনার আবেগে উৎসারিত হইয়াছে। কাব্যের যে

কোনও অংশ উদ্ধৃত করিলেই কবির ক্ষমতার পরিচয় দেওয়া যাইতে পারে।

“শ্বেত, রক্ত, নীল, পীত স্তম্ভ সারি সারি
ধরে উচ্চ স্বর্ণছাদ, ফণীন্দ্র যেমতি
বিস্তারি অমৃত ফণা, ধরেন আদরে
ধরারে।”

—(প্রথম সর্গ)

এই বর্ণনা হইতে দেখা যায় যে রাবণের বিরাট ঐশ্বর্য্য ধীরে ধীরে প্রকাশ পাইতেছে। ইহাকে মিত্রাক্ষরে বর্ণনা করিতে গেলে ঐশ্বর্য্যের বিস্তীর্ণতা সম্যক প্রকাশ পাইতে পারিত না।

“কনক আসনে বসে দশানন বলী
হেমকূট-হৈমশিরে শৃঙ্গবর যথা
তেজঃপুঞ্জ।”

— (প্রথম সর্গ)

“তেজঃপুঞ্জ” শব্দটি তৃতীয় ছত্রে বসিয়াছে বলিয়া বিশেষভাবে দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করে। যদি ইহা দ্বিতীয় ছত্রে বসিত এবং সেখানেই যতি পড়িত, তাহা হইলে দশাননের মহিমার বিস্তৃতি সম্পূর্ণ প্রকাশিত হইতে পারিত না। অত্যাগ্র বর্ণনায়ও কল্পনার এই সমৃদ্ধি ও বন্ধনহীনতার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দে পঙ্খের লালিত্য ও গঙ্খের স্বাধীনতার সমন্বয় হয়। এই জগ্ন কথোপকথনে ইহার উপযোগিতা বিশেষভাবে লক্ষ্য করা যায়। ষষ্ঠ সর্গে ইন্দ্রজিৎ ও লক্ষ্মণ এবং ইন্দ্রজিৎ ও বিভীষণের মধ্যে যে কথোপকথনের বর্ণনা দেওয়া হইয়াছে তাহা এই কাব্যের সর্ব্বশ্রেষ্ঠ সম্পদ। এই কথোপকথন মিত্রাক্ষর ছন্দে বর্ণিত হইলে ইহার স্বাভাবিকতা ও ওজস্বিতা নষ্ট হইয়া যাইত। যে কোনও বাক্যাংশ উদ্ধৃত করিলেই কথোপকথন বর্ণনায় অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দের মাধুর্য্য ও উপযোগিতা প্রমাণিত হইবে।

“শশে যদি কাকোদর গরুড়ের নীড়ে
ফিরি কি সে যায় কভু আপন বিবরে
পামর ?”

শ্রীমতী নীহার দাশগুপ্তা

লক্ষ্মণের এই বাক্যের প্রথম দুইটি ছত্র লইলে ইহাকে মিত্রাক্ষর ছন্দ বলিয়া মনে করা যাইতে পারে। কিন্তু তৃতীয় ছত্রে “পামর” শব্দটি থাকায় লক্ষ্মণের ক্রোধ ও জিঘাংসা দীর্ঘায়ত হইয়াছে। এই ভাবে আমরা দেখিতে পাই, মহাকাব্যের ওজস্বিতা এবং স্বাভাবিক কথোপকথনের সাবলীলতার সামঞ্জস্য রক্ষা করা হইয়াছে।

মধুসূদনের উপর পাশ্চাত্যের প্রভাব

উনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে সমগ্র বঙ্গদেশ পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষা ও সভ্যতার আলোকে উদ্ভাসিত হইয়াছিল। ইংরাজী সাহিত্য প্রচলনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে দেশের চিন্তার এবং ভাবের পরিবর্তন দেখা গেল। শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালীগণ ইংরাজী সাহিত্যের প্রতি অধিক পরিমাণে আকৃষ্ট হইয়া পড়িলেন— ফলে বাংলা সাহিত্য তাঁহাদের অবহেলার বস্তু হইল। মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত মহাশয় ইঁহাদিগেরই অন্যতম। এই যুগে জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়া তিনি পাশ্চাত্য সাহিত্যকে আদর্শস্বরূপ গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন, ইহাতে আশ্চর্যের কিছু নাই। “বাংলা ভাষা ভুলিয়া যাওয়াই ভাল” এই বাক্য তাঁহারই মুখ হইতে নির্গত হইয়াছিল। কিন্তু সৌভাগ্যের বিষয় এই যে তাঁহার এই ভ্রান্তি বেশী দিন স্থায়ী হইল না। তিনি বুঝিতে পারিলেন যে বিদেশী ভাষায় লিখিত কাব্য তাঁহাকে যশস্বী করিবে না। সেইজন্ত মাতৃভাষা সম্যকভাবে শিক্ষা করিতে তিনি আত্মনিয়োগ করিলেন। কিন্তু তাঁহার সমুদয় গ্রন্থগুলিতেই পাশ্চাত্যভাবের প্রতি প্রবণতা সমধিক পরিমাণে পরিলক্ষিত হয়। Homer, Shakespeare ও Milton-এর আদর্শ অনুসারে তিনি তাঁহার কাব্য প্রণয়ন করিয়াছেন। মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্য যে পাশ্চাত্য আদর্শ অনুসারে লিখিত তাহা মধুসূদন নিজে বহুবার স্বীকার করিয়াছেন। শ্রীযুক্ত প্রিয়রঞ্জন সেন মহাশয় তাঁহার “Western Influence in Bengali Literature” নামক গ্রন্থে মধুসূদনের ঋণের তালিকা দিয়াছেন :—

“There are numerous indications as to his ‘sources’ which he has himself given; e.g., the opening lines কোন দেব মোহের শৃঙ্খলে, etc., of Meghnādbadh, Canto II, are taken as adapted from Cowper’s translation of Homer’s Iliad which, he takes care

to add, had influenced Milton's line—'who first seduced them to that foul revolt?' Canto II was, on his own admission, taken from Iliad, XIV, from Juno's visit to Jupiter on Mount Ida. In the same canto, the image of Rati is cast in the mould of Aphrodite, Kama or Cupid of Somnus. Later in the book, the character of Pramila may have been constructed after Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata, Bk. XVI; Indrajit's and Pramila's rise from sleep, after the similar experience of Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost, Book V; Indrajit's slaughter may have been based on Homer who never represents any respectable Greek chief slain in fair fight by a Trojan, the author's sympathies may have been reversed in this case; Canto VIII, however, is based on Ænead, as the poet declares in a friendly epistle to Rajnarayan Basu: 'Mr. Ram is to be conducted through Hell to his father, Dasaratha, like another Æneas.'

But more important than these interesting 'sources' is the confession of the poet that he conformed to Milton more than to Homer. The partiality for the English poet appears again and again in his letters."*

এই সমস্ত বিচ্ছিন্ন দৃষ্টান্তের কথা ছাড়িয়া দিয়া মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্যটিকে সমগ্র-ভাবে দেখিলে পাশ্চাত্য প্রভাবের গভীরতা অনুভূত হয়। Homer, Milton প্রভৃতির অনুকরণে মধুসূদন বাগ্দেরী ও বাস্মাকির বন্দনা করিয়াছেন। যে ভাবে তিনি কাহিনীর বিবাস ও সর্গ বিভাগ করিয়াছেন তাহাও পাশ্চাত্য প্রভাবের পরিচয় দেয়। মধুসূদন স্বীকার করিয়াছেন যে তিনি Milton-কেই তাঁহার আদর্শরূপে গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন। Milton তাঁহার Paradise Lost লিখিয়াছিলেন "to justify the ways of God to man"; কিন্তু তাঁহার মহাকাব্যের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ চরিত্র সয়তান। মধুসূদনও তাঁহার আখ্যানিকা গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন রামায়ণ হইতে; কিন্তু তাঁহার নায়ক রাম বা লক্ষ্মণ নহেন—রাবণ ও ইন্দ্রজিৎ। অবশ্য এই বিষয়ে Milton ও মধুসূদনের কাব্যের মধ্যে পার্থক্য আছে। Milton ধর্মভীরু খ্রীষ্টান ছিলেন। তিনি সয়তানকে প্রাধান্য

দিয়াছেন অজ্ঞাতসারে। মধুসূদন ইচ্ছা করিয়াই রাম ও লক্ষ্মণকে হীনপ্রভ করিয়াছেন। এইখানেই পাশ্চাত্য প্রভাবের গভীরতা প্রমাণিত হয়। তিনি প্রায় সম্পূর্ণভাবে নিজেকে দেশীয় প্রভাব হইতে মুক্ত করিয়াছিলেন; শুধু সীতাদেবীর চরিত্রে ভারতবর্ষের সনাতন আদর্শ উজ্জ্বল হইয়া উঠিয়াছে।

খণ্ডকাব্য

বীরাজনা-কাব্যের সঙ্গে মধুসূদনের অন্যান্য কবিতার মৌলিক সাদৃশ্য আছে। ইহার বিষয়বস্তু ভারতবর্ষের পৌরাণিক কাহিনী হইতে গৃহীত, কিন্তু ইহার রচনা-ভঙ্গী গ্রীক ও ল্যাটিন Epistle-এর কথা স্মরণ করাইয়া দেয়। অবশ্য ইহাও স্বীকার করিতে হইবে যে প্রতি পত্রিকায় মধুসূদনের কল্পনার মৌলিকতা একটি হইয়াছে। এই কাব্যটিকে কতকগুলি মহাকাব্যের খণ্ডের সমষ্টি হিসাবে বিচার করা যাইতে পারে। ইহার মধ্যে বীররসের প্রাধান্য লক্ষিত হয়। অবশ্য “জয়দ্রথের প্রতি দুঃশলা,” “দুঃশন্তের প্রতি শকুন্তলা,” “সোমের প্রতি তারা” প্রভৃতি পত্রিকায় বীররস অপেক্ষা কোমল ও করুণ রসের প্রাচুর্য দেখা যায়। বিষয়বস্তুনির্ব্বাচনে মাইকেলের মনোভাব প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। শকুন্তলা, দ্রৌপদী, ভানুমতী, জনা প্রভৃতি রমণীর সতীত্বগৌরব ও তেজস্বিতা যুগে যুগে কীর্তিত হইয়া আসিতেছে। কিন্তু শূর্ণগথা ও কেকয়ী ভারতবর্ষীয় রমণীগণের মধ্যে নীচতার জ্ঞান চিরকাল নিন্দিত ও ঘৃণিত হইয়াছে। সোমের প্রতি তারার প্রেম নিষিদ্ধ ও গর্হিত লালসা। কিন্তু মধুসূদন ইহাদিগকে বীরাজনা বলিয়া গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন এবং ইহাদের তেজ ও মহিমা কীর্তন করিয়াছেন। এই অভিনব দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী দেশীয় সংস্কার হইতে মুক্তির পরিচয় দেয়।

“সোমের প্রতি তারা,” “দশরথের প্রতি কেকয়ী,” “নীলধ্বজের প্রতি জনা,” “লক্ষ্মণের প্রতি শূর্ণগথা”—এই পত্রিকাগুলি বঙ্গকবিতার ইতিহাসে শ্রেষ্ঠ আসন অধিকার করিবে। “সোমের প্রতি তারা,” “লক্ষ্মণের প্রতি শূর্ণগথা” এই কবিতাষয় প্রেম-পত্রিকা। ইহাদের প্রেম “প্রণয়-ভীরা বোড়শী”র প্রেম নহে, ইহা তেজস্বিনী বীরাজনার ভীরা আকাজক্ষা। তারা পত্রিকার প্রারম্ভে অসতীর লজ্জা অনুভব করিয়াছেন। কিন্তু ক্রমে বুঝিতে

পারিয়াছেন যে প্রণয়িনীর উন্মত্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষার কাছে সত্যের লজ্জা তুচ্ছ। তাই তিনি সোমকে বলিয়াছেন,

“হায়রে, কি পাপে, বিধি, এ তাপ লিখিলে
এ ভালে ? জন্ম মম মহা-ঋষিকুলে,
তবু চণ্ডালিনী আমি !”

রবীন্দ্রনাথের “কচ ও দেবযানী”-সংবাদে দেবযানীর উক্তির সঙ্গে তারার উক্তির কথঞ্চিৎ সাদৃশ্য আছে। কিন্তু সাদৃশ্য অপেক্ষা পার্থক্যের প্রতি লক্ষ্য রাখিলে মধুসূদনের প্রতিভার স্বকীয়তা অনুভূত হইবে। দেবযানীর অনুভূতির বিস্তৃতি ও বৈচিত্র্য তারার মধ্যে প্রত্যাশা করা যায় না। কিন্তু তারার লালসা এত তীব্র, প্রণয়ীকে পাইবার জন্য আগ্রহ এত উন্মত্ত যে আমরা তাহাকে বীরাজনা বলিয়া অভিবাদন করিতে পারি। শূর্ণগথা সম্বন্ধে মধুসূদন নিজেই লিখিয়াছেন, “কবিগুরু বাম্পীকি রাজেন্দ্র রাবণের পরিবারবর্গকে প্রায়ই বীভৎস রস দিয়া বর্ণনা করিয়াছেন।” কিন্তু এই স্থলে সে রসের লেশমাত্র নাই। শূর্ণগথার প্রেমে কুমারীর প্রথম প্রেমের নবীনতা বিস্ময়-মুগ্ধতা ও কমনীয়তা লক্ষিত হয়।

“কে তুমি—বিজ্ঞন বনে ভ্রম হে একাকী,
বিভূতি-ভূষিত অঙ্গ ?”

* * * *

“হে সুন্দর ! শীঘ্র আসি কহ মোরে শুনি—
কোন্ দুঃখে ভব-সুখে বিমুখ হইলা
এ নব-যৌবনে তুমি ? কোন্ অভিমানে
রাজবেশ ত্যজি তুমি উদাসীর বেশে ?”

শূর্ণগথার হৃদয় গভীর আবেগে পরিপূর্ণ। রাজেন্দ্র রাবণের ভগিনী রাজপ্রাসাদের ভোগে বিলাসে চিরাভ্যস্তা হইলেও, প্রণয়ে তিনি দীনা। তাই অতি করুণ ভাবে লক্ষ্মণকে কহিতেছেন,

“* * * দাসী-ভাবে সেবিবে এ দাসী।
এস শীঘ্র, প্রাণেশ্বর ! আর কথা যত
নিবেদিব পাদপদ্মে বসিয়া বিরলে।
ক্ষম অশ্রু-চিহ্ন পত্রে।”

শূর্ণপথার মধ্যে কমনীয়তা, নবীনতা ও তীব্রতার যে সামঞ্জস্য চিত্রিত হইয়াছে তাহার তুলনা বিরল।

শকুন্তলা ও দ্রৌপদীর পত্রে স্বামীর বিস্মরণে দুঃখ ও অভিমান প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। শূর্ণপথা কিংবা তারার পত্রের স্থায় ইঁহাদের পত্রিকা আবেগময় নহে। ইঁহারা পতিবিরহে কাতরা—ইঁহাদের প্রেম লালসাপূর্ণ নয়। ভানুমতী ও দুঃশলার পত্রে স্বামীর অকল্যাণভীতি প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। তাঁহারা স্বামীর কল্যাণের জন্ত যুদ্ধ হইতে স্বামীকে নিবৃত্ত হইতে সকাতির অনুরোধ করিতেছেন। “নীলধ্বজের প্রতি জনা,” “দশরথের প্রতি কেকয়ী” প্রেমের কাব্য নহে। ইঁহাদিগকে অনুযোগ-পত্রিকা বলা যাইতে পারে। যে রমণী “লজ্জিতা” নহে, যে মনের আকাঙ্ক্ষা মনের মধ্যেই বিলীন করিয়া দেয় না, যে “দুর্জয় আশ্বাসে” “দুর্গমের দুর্গ” হইতে আপনার দাবী কাড়িয়া আনিতে পারে, মধুসূদন জনা ও কেকয়ীর মধ্যে তাহারই চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন। জনার বীরত্বের কাহিনী মহাভারতে বর্ণিত হইয়াছে। গিরিশচন্দ্র ঘোষ এই আখ্যায়িকা অবলম্বন করিয়া একখানি উচ্চাঙ্গের নাটক রচনা করিয়াছেন। কিন্তু মধুসূদনের নাট্যকার কাছে মহাভারতের ও গিরিশচন্দ্রের জনা অপেক্ষাকৃত নিম্নতর। জনা স্বামীকে ব্যঙ্গ করিতেছেন; তিনি পুত্রের জন্ত পাগলিনী হইয়াছেন। মাহেশ্বরী-পুরীর প্রতি যে অবমাননা করা হইয়াছে, তাহাতে তাঁহার দেশাত্মবোধ পীড়িত হইয়াছে। তাই তিনি ক্ষোভে, লজ্জায় জাহ্নবীর জলে প্রাণ-বিসর্জন করিতে চলিয়াছেন।

“দশরথের প্রতি কেকয়ী” বীরাজনা-কাব্যে সর্বোচ্চ প্রশংসিত পত্রিকা। কেকয়ী কখনও বিস্ময়ের ভাব প্রকাশ করিতেছেন, কখনও দশরথকে লইয়া কৌতুক করিতেছেন, কখনও ক্রোধ প্রকাশ করিতেছেন, আবার কখনও অকুণ্ঠিতচিত্তে নিজের দাবী জানাইতেছেন। সর্বশেষের চিত্রটি সর্বাপেক্ষা কাব্যময়। কেকয়ী বলিতেছেন যে, তিনি দেশদেশান্তরে ঘুরিয়া বেড়াইবেন এবং সর্বত্র প্রচার করিবেন,

“পরম অধর্ম্মাচারী রঘুকুলপতি।’

গস্ত্রীরে অশ্বরে যথা নাদে কাদস্বিনী,

এ মোর দুঃখের কথা কব সঙ্গজনে!

পথিকে, গৃহস্থে, রাজে, কাঙালে, তাপসে,—

যেখানে যাহারে পাব, কব তার কাছে—

‘পরম অধর্ম্মাচারী রঘুকুলপতি !’

পুষি সারী-শুক দৌহে শিখাব যতনে

এ মোর দুঃখের কথা, দিবস রজনী।

শিখিলে একথা তবে দিব দৌহে ছাড়ি

অরণ্যে। গাহিবে তারা বসি বৃক্ষশাখে,

‘পরম অধর্ম্মাচারী রঘুকুলপতি’।”

কবির কল্পনা কেবলীয় হৃদয়ের জ্বালাকে প্রকৃতির মধ্যে প্রতিফলিত করিয়া দিয়াছে। মনে হয়, সমস্ত বিশ্বে কেবলীয় প্রতি অবিচার অনুরণিত হইয়াছে।

মধুসূদন আধুনিক বাংলা সাহিত্যে প্রথম প্রকৃত কবি। হুন্দে, বিষয়বস্তুতে, কাব্যগঠনে, তিনি সম্পূর্ণ নূতন পথ সৃষ্টি করিয়া গিয়াছেন। সেই পথ অনুসরণ করিয়াই আধুনিক বাংলা-সাহিত্য রবীন্দ্রনাথের মধ্যে পরম পরিপূর্ণতা লাভ করিয়াছে। পাশ্চাত্য কাব্য ও সাহিত্যের দ্বারা প্রভাবান্বিত হইলেও মধুসূদনের মধ্যে বাংলা কাব্যের মূলধারা বিনষ্ট হয় নাই। বাংলা সাহিত্যের মূলধারা হইতেছে গীতিকাব্য, এবং এই গীতিকাব্যের প্রধান বাহন হইতেছে রাধাকৃষ্ণের প্রেমলীলা। জয়দেবের গীতগোবিন্দ সংস্কৃতে লিখিত হইলেও তাহাকে বাংলা গীতিকাব্যের উৎস বলিয়া ধরা যাইতে পারে। জয়দেব হইতে আরম্ভ করিয়া চণ্ডীদাস, জ্ঞানদাস, গোবিন্দদাস, বলরাম দাস প্রভৃতি পুরাতন বাংলা সাহিত্যে শ্রেষ্ঠ কবি সকলেই ব্রজলীলাকে উপজীব্য করিয়া সাহিত্যের সৃষ্টি করিয়া গিয়াছেন। মধুসূদন লিখিয়াছেন ব্রজাঙ্গনা-কাব্য, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর লিখিয়াছেন ভানুসিংহ ঠাকুরের পদাবলী।

ভক্তের সহিত ভগবানের সম্বন্ধ বৈষ্ণব কবির নানারূপ রসের মধ্য দিয়া অনুভব করিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছেন। বৈষ্ণব সাহিত্য রসের চিরন্তন প্রস্রবণ। বৈষ্ণব সাধকগণ তাই ভগবানকে রসময় বলিয়া অভিনন্দিত করেন।

ব্রজাঙ্গনা-কাব্যে মধুসূদন আদিরসের অবতারণা করিয়াছেন। জয়দেব, চণ্ডীদাস ও বিজ্ঞাপতি প্রমুখ অমৃতভিলাষী বৈষ্ণব কবির ললিত-মধুর পদাবলীতে কৃষ্ণলীলা বর্ণনা করিয়াছেন। মধুসূদন তাঁহাদেরই মত ব্রজাঙ্গনা-কাব্য রচনা করিয়াছেন। রাধিকার কৃষ্ণবিরহই এই কাব্যের প্রতিপাদ্য বিষয়। এখানে কবি রাধাকে পতি-বিরহ-বিধুরা সাধারণ রমণী মাত্র করিয়াছেন—কৃষ্ণপ্রেমে

ভক্তিমতী রাধিকার চিত্র আঁকেন নাই। কৃষ্ণ এখানে ভগবান নহেন—প্রেমিক পুরুষ মাত্র। শ্রীকৃষ্ণ যখন বৃন্দাবন ত্যাগ করিয়া মথুরায় গেলেন তখন তাঁহার অদর্শনে শ্রীমতীর হৃদয়ে যে বিরহ, যে ব্যাকুলতা উদ্বেল হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল, কবি অতি কোমল ও করুণ ভাবে তাহা বর্ণনা করিয়াছেন। কৃষ্ণহারা রাধিকার নিকট বৃন্দাবনের সেই চিরস্নিগ্ধ, সুন্দর পুরী মরুভূমির স্থায় প্রতীয়মান হইতেছে। শ্রীরাধার বিরহবেদনা প্রকৃতির মধ্যে প্রতিফলিত হইয়া অসাধারণ তীব্রতা লাভ করিয়াছে। শ্রীমতী বসন্তের বিচিত্র শোভা দেখিয়া আনন্দ অনুভব করিয়াছেন, কিন্তু শ্রীকৃষ্ণের অভাব স্মরণ করিয়া সেই আনন্দ বিরহ-বাধাকে গভীরতর ও করুণতর করিয়া তুলিয়াছে।

“যে কালে ফুটে লো ফুল, কোকিল কুহরে, সই !

কুসুম কাননে ;

মুঞ্জরয়ে তরুবলী, গুঞ্জরয়ে সুখে অলি,

প্রেমানন্দ-মনে,

সে কালে কি বিনোদিয়া, প্রেমে জলাঞ্জলি দিয়া,

ভুলিতে পারেন, সখি ! গোকুলভবন ?

চল লো নিকুঞ্জবনে পাইব সে ধন।”

আত্মহারা উন্মাদিনী রাধিকার স্বাভাবিক বাহ্যিক জ্ঞান লুপ্ত হইয়াছে। তিনি প্রাকৃতিক সমগ্র বস্তুতেই তাঁহার প্রেমিককে খুঁজিয়া বেড়াইতেছেন। কৃষ্ণবিরহিণী রাধিকা বংশীধ্বনি, পৃথিবী, শুক, সারিকা প্রভৃতিকে লক্ষ্য করিয়া বিলাপ করিতেছেন। কৃষ্ণ-জিজ্ঞাসাই তাঁহার প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য। ময়ূরীকে লক্ষ্য করিয়া তিনি তাঁহার হৃদয়ের আবেগের যে বর্ণনা দিয়াছেন তাহা প্রত্যেক পাঠকের মনে গভীর রেখাপাত করে। তিনি ময়ূরীর প্রতি সহানুভূতি প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন,

“আয় পাখী ! আমরা দুজনে গলাধরাধরি করি

ভাবি লো নীরবে,

নবীন নীরদে প্রাণ

তুই করেছিস্ দান,

সে কি তোর হবে ?

আর কি পাইবে রাধা রাধিকারঞ্জে ?

তুই ভাব ঘনে, ধনি, আমি শ্রীমাধবে।”

কখনও কলধরকে দেখিয়া, কখনও-বা পুষ্পরাশি দর্শনে, আবার কখনও-বা পূর্ণচন্দ্রোদয় অবলোকন করিয়া পূর্বস্মৃতি-পীড়িতা রাধিকা খেদোক্তি করিয়াছেন এবং এই বিলাপ অতি কোমল ও করুণ সুরে ধ্বনিত হইয়াছে। প্রাকৃতিক বস্তুর মধ্য দিয়া শ্রীমতীর কৃষ্ণ-পিপাসার পূর্ণ-বিকাশ হইয়াছে। তাঁহার বিরহের উচ্ছ্বাস সুন্দর ও প্রাঞ্জল ভাষায় প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে।

“ফেলিয়া দিয়াছি আমি

শত অলঙ্কার—

রতন, যুকুতা, হীরা, সব অভরণ।

ছিঁ ডিয়াছি ফুলমালা,

জুড়াতে মনের জ্বালা,

চন্দন-চর্চিত দেহে ভস্মের লেপন।”

ব্রজাঙ্গনা-কাব্যের মধ্যে আমরা চণ্ডীদাস, জ্ঞানদাস প্রভৃতি বৈষ্ণব পদকর্তাদের আধ্যাত্মিক আৰ্ত্তি (devotional sincerity) খুঁজিয়া পাই না। বৈষ্ণব পদকর্তারা যে আধ্যাত্মিক প্রেরণা ও অনুভূতি হইতে কাব্যসৃষ্টি করিয়াছিলেন তাহা কবি মধুসূদনের মধ্যে নাই। হিন্দুধর্মসাধনায় তাঁহার আস্থা ছিল না; সুতরাং বৈষ্ণব সাধনায়ও তিনি ভক্তিমান ছিলেন না। কিন্তু বাল্যে তিনি বৈষ্ণব পরিবারের মধ্যে পরিবর্দ্ধিত হইয়াছিলেন এবং তাঁহার কবিচিত্ত প্রাচীন বাংলা সাহিত্যের বৈষ্ণবীয় ভাবরসে পরিপুষ্ট হইয়াছিল। সুতরাং মধুসূদন যখন রাধাকৃষ্ণ-প্রেমলীলা অবলম্বনে গীতিকাব্য রচনা করিলেন তখন বুঝা গেল যে বিরুদ্ধ শিক্ষা এবং আবহাওয়ার মধ্যেও শ্রেষ্ঠ সাহিত্যিকের লেখায় জাতিগত সংস্কার ও বৈশিষ্ট্য কোনও না কোনও প্রকারে নিজের প্রকাশ-পথ খুঁজিয়া লইয়াছে। আধ্যাত্মিক প্রেরণা ও অনুভূতি না থাকিলেও ব্রজাঙ্গনা-কাব্যের কবিতাগুলির আকর্ষণের হানি হয় নাই। বিরহের অনুভূতির তীব্রতা কবিতাগুলিকে একটি বিশিষ্টতা দান করিয়াছে। এই বৈশিষ্ট্য রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভানুসিংহ-ভণিতার কবিতাগুলিতে নাই। তাঁহার এই কবিতাগুলি সম্বন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলিয়াছেন যে “এগুলি বিলাতি সস্তা আর্গিনের টুং টাং মাত্র।”

মধুসূদন যেমন তাঁহার মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্যে অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দ রচনার দক্ষতা দেখাইয়াছেন, তেমনি ব্রজাঙ্গনা-কাব্যে মিত্রাক্ষর ছন্দ রচনারও সমধিক নৈপুণ্যের পরিচয় দিয়াছেন। রাধার অনন্ত বিরহ-ব্যথা কবির মিত্রাক্ষর ছন্দের দ্বারা কাব্যে প্রকাশ করিতে প্রয়াস পাইয়াছেন। বীররসের জ্বালা আদিরসের অবতারণায়ও কবির কৃতিত্ব প্রশংসনীয়। এই কাব্যখণ্ড মধুসূদনের প্রতিভার

বৈচিত্র্য ও বিস্তৃতির পরিচয় দেয়। ব্রজাঙ্গনা-কাব্যের আর একটি বিশেষত্ব ছন্দের বৈচিত্র্য। ইহার পূর্বের অমিতাক্ষরের কথা বাদ দিলে আমরা শুধু পয়ার এবং ত্রিপদী ছন্দের বিভিন্ন রূপেরই উদাহরণ পাই। কিন্তু ব্রজাঙ্গনা-কাব্যে মধুসূদন পয়ার ত্রিপদী ভাঙ্গিয়া দিয়া বহুতর নূতন ছন্দের সৃষ্টি করিয়াছেন। এইরূপ ছন্দ বাংলা সাহিত্যে ইতিপূর্বের দেখা যায় নাই।

“কনক-উদয়াচলে তুমি দেখা দিলে
হে সুর-সুন্দরি !

কুমুদ মুদয়ে আঁখি, কিন্তু স্তখে গায় পাখী,
গুঞ্জরি নিকুঞ্জে ভ্রমে ভ্রমর-ভ্রমরী ;
বর সরোজিনী ধনি, তুমি হে তার সজ্জনী,
নিত্য তার প্রাণনাথে আন সাথে করি।

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কেন এত ফুল তুলিলা, সজ্জনী ! -
ভরিয়া ডালা ?

মেঘাবৃত হ'লে, পরে কি রজ্জনী
তারার মালা ?

আর কি যতনে, কুস্তম-রতনে
ব্রজের বালা ?

আর কি পরিবে কভু ফুলহার
ব্রজ-কামিনী ?”

চতুর্দশপদী কবিতাবলী

সনেটের জন্মস্থান “ইতালী, বিখ্যাত দেশ, কাব্যের কানন”। ইহার জন্মদাতা কবি পেত্রার্ক। মাইকেল মধুসূদন ইতালীয় সাহিত্যের সহিত

সবিশেষ পরিচিত ছিলেন। তিনি ইতালীয় সনেটকে তাঁহার আদর্শরূপে গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন। সনেটের উপযোগিতা সম্পর্কে দুই একটি কথা বলা প্রয়োজন।

সনেট চতুর্দশপদী কবিতা। প্রত্যেকটি কবিতার চৌদ্দ ছত্রে পরিসমাপ্তি হইতে হয়। এই জগৎ ইহার মধ্যে বিস্তৃত চরিত্রচিত্রণ, সূক্ষ্ম বিশ্লেষণ অথবা সুদীর্ঘ বর্ণনার অবকাশ হয় না। কিন্তু কোনও একটি ছোট ভাব অথবা একটি ভীক্স অথচ সঙ্গীর্ণ অনুভূতির অভিব্যক্তির পক্ষে ইহা অতিশয় উপযোগী। উপন্যাসের সঙ্গে ছোটগল্পের যেরূপ পার্থক্য রহিয়াছে, দীর্ঘগীতিকাব্য এবং সনেটের মধ্যেও সেইরূপ পার্থক্য দেখা যায়। যে সমস্ত পলাতক অনুভূতি আপনাতে আপনি পরিসমাপ্ত হয় তাহাদের অভিব্যক্তির জগৎ সনেট প্রকৃষ্ট বাহন।

বঙ্গসাহিত্যে মধুসূদন সনেটের প্রবর্তনা করিয়াছেন, এবং ইহার উপযোগিতার জগৎ ইহা বঙ্গসাহিত্যে চিরস্থায়ী হইয়াছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের বহু শ্রেষ্ঠ কবিতা সনেট আকারে লিখিত। “পুরাতন চিঠি,” “বঙ্গমাতা,” “মানসী,” “কুমারসম্ভব গান” প্রভৃতি সনেট যে কোনও দেশের শ্রেষ্ঠ কবিতার সঙ্গে উপমিত হইতে পারে। ইতালীয় আদর্শে রচিত সনেট সাধারণতঃ দুই ভাগে বিভক্ত হয়। প্রথম আট ছত্রে ভাবটিকে প্রকাশ করা হয়, শেষের ছয় ছত্রে সেই ভাবটিরই পুনরাবৃত্তি অথবা তাহার কোনও শাখা-প্রশাখার অভিব্যক্তি দেওয়া হয়। এই ভাবে সমস্ত কবিতাটিকে অপরূপ সম্পূর্ণতা দেওয়া হয়। কোনও কোনও কবি—যথা শেক্সপিয়র—অন্য রীতিতে সনেট রচনা করিয়াছেন। শেক্সপিয়র তিনটি স্তবক রচনা করেন, প্রত্যেকটিতে চারিটি ছত্র; তাহার পরে দুই ছত্রে কবিতাটিকে সমাপ্তি দান করেন।

মধুসূদন পেত্রার্কীয় রীতি অবলম্বন করিয়াছেন—কেবল “সীতাদেবী” নামক কবিতায় তিনি অপর রীতির আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন। চতুর্দশপদী কবিতাবলীর মধ্যে “বঙ্গভাষা,” “কালিদাস,” “কপোতাক্ষ নদ,” “বিজয়াদশমী” প্রভৃতি সমধিক প্রসিদ্ধ। এই সকল কবিতায় তিনি কোনও একটি ভাবকে অবলম্বন করিয়া, তাহাকেই সুসংযত, সুবিগলিত অভিব্যক্তি দিয়াছেন। তাঁহার “আগ্নি মাস” নামক কবিতাটি পড়িলে মনে হয় যে ধর্ম্মাস্তুর গ্রহণ করিলেও অন্তরের গভীরতম প্রদেশে তিনি চিরদিনই স্বধর্ম্মানুরাগী ছিলেন। সুদূর প্রবাসে

পাশ্চাত্য আবেষ্কনের মধ্যে থাকিলেও তাঁহার হৃদয়ে দুর্গোৎসবের স্মৃতি বিরাজিত ছিল। তিনি লিখিয়াছেন,

“সু-শ্যামান্ন বস্ত্র এবৈ মহাত্মতে রত।

এসেছেন ফিরি উমা, বৎসরের পরে,

মহিমমর্দিনী রূপে ভকতের ঘরে ;

* * * পূর্বকথা কেন ক’য়ে স্মৃতি,

আনিছ হে বারি-ধারা আজি এ নয়নে ?

ফলিবে কি মনে পুনঃ সে পূর্ব-ভকতি ?”

তিনি বঙ্গভাষা সম্পর্কে তাঁহার মনোভাবের সুদীর্ঘ বর্ণনা দেন নাই। তিনি যে যৌবনে পরধনলোভে মত্ত হইয়া বিদেশীয় ভাষার সাধনা করিয়াছিলেন এবং অবশেষে স্বপ্নে তাঁহার সে ভ্রাস্তি যে ভাঙ্গিয়া গেল তাহারই সুন্দর সরল অথচ আবেগময় বর্ণনা দিয়াছেন। প্রথম আট ছত্রে তাঁহার ভ্রাস্তির বর্ণনা দেওয়া হইয়াছে এবং শেষ ছয় ছত্রে তিনি সেই ভ্রাস্তি-অপনোদনের চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন। মহাকাব্যে মধুসূদন অতি সুদীর্ঘ ও জটিল উপমার সাহায্য লইয়াছেন, কিন্তু সনেটের উপমা অতি সংক্ষিপ্ত—“কেলিনু শৈবালে, ভুলি কমল কাননে।”

“কপোতাক্ষ নদ” সনেটেও সংক্ষিপ্ততা, তীব্র অনুভূতি ও অভিযান্ত্রিক মাধুর্য্যের সামঞ্জস্য হইয়াছে। প্রবাসী কবির মন কপোতাক্ষ নদের কথা স্মরণ করিয়া আলোড়িত হইয়াছে। প্রথম আট ছত্রে কবি এই আলোড়নের বর্ণনা দিয়াছেন এবং শেষ ছয় ছত্রে এই আলোড়নেরই একটি বিশিষ্ট দিক বর্ণিত হইয়াছে। কবি প্রশ্ন করিয়াছেন, “আর কি হবে দেখা ?” এই প্রশ্নের সদুত্তর দিতে না পারিয়া তিনি এই বলিয়া নিজেকে প্রবোধ দিয়াছেন,

“—এ প্রবাসে মজি প্রেমভাবে

লইছে সে তব নাম বঙ্গের সঙ্গীতে।”

অগাধ শ্রেষ্ঠ সনেটগুলিতেও ভাষা ও ভাবের লালিত্য ও সংযমের সমন্বয় হইয়াছে ; বিশেষতঃ, অধিকাংশ কবিতার মধ্য দিয়া প্রবাসীর দেশান্ত্রবোধ অতি করুণ সুরে ধ্বনিত হইয়াছে।

মধুসূদনের নাট্যপ্রতিভা

নাটক লিখিত হয় অভিনয়ের উদ্দেশ্যে। কতকগুলি অভিনেতা রঙ্গমঞ্চের উপর অঙ্গভঙ্গী ও কথোপকথনের দ্বারা ভাব প্রকাশ করিতে চেষ্টা করে। এই কারণে নাটকে বর্ণনা অপেক্ষা কার্যকলার (action) প্রয়োজনীয়তা বেশী। ইংরাজী Drama শব্দ গ্রীক “Drao” শব্দ হইতে উৎপন্ন; Drao শব্দের অর্থ “করা” (to do)। নাটকে বাহিরের ঘটনা একান্তভাবে অপরিহার্য। শেক্সপিয়র প্রভৃতি শ্রেষ্ঠ নাট্যকার স্বগতোক্তির অবতারণা করিয়াছেন, কিন্তু সেইখানেও স্বগতোক্তির সঙ্গে বাহিরের ঘটনার সংযোগ খুব নিবিড় ও প্রত্যক্ষ।

সাহিত্যের প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য মানবজীবনের গভীরতম অনুভূতির অভিব্যক্তি দেওয়া। সুতরাং শুধু বাহিরের ঘটনা অবলম্বন করিয়া কোনও শ্রেষ্ঠ সাহিত্য রচিত হইতে পারে না। বাহিরের ঘটনার অন্তরালে হৃদয়ের নানা প্রবৃত্তির সংঘর্ষ ও সম্মিলনের চিত্র আঁকা প্রয়োজন। নাটকে নানা পাত্রপাত্রীর অবতারণা করা হইয়া থাকে। তাহারা দুই বিরুদ্ধ দলে শ্রেণীবদ্ধ হইয়া একটি সংঘর্ষের সৃষ্টি করে। আবার প্রধান পাত্রপাত্রীদের হৃদয়ে নানা প্রবৃত্তির সংঘর্ষের সৃষ্টি করিয়া নাট্যকার মানবজীবনের গূঢ় রহস্যের চিত্র আঁকেন।

মধুসূদন যখন নাটক লিখেন তখন বাংলার নাট্যসাহিত্য সম্পূর্ণরূপে অপরিণত। যে কোনও কারণেই হউক বাংলার নাট্যসাহিত্য আজিও সমৃদ্ধি লাভ করে নাই। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলিয়াছেন যে, নাটকের মধ্যে এমন একটা প্রত্যক্ষতা আছে যাহা বাঙ্গালীর প্রতিভার পক্ষে অশুকুল নহে। * মধুসূদনের নাটক তিনখানি (শর্মিষ্ঠা, পদ্মাবতী, কৃষ্ণকুমারী) কোনও দিক্ দিয়াই খুব উৎকৃষ্ট নহে। শর্মিষ্ঠা-উপাখ্যান ভারতীয় শর্মিষ্ঠা-কিন্দদন্তী হইতে গৃহীত; পদ্মাবতী-নাটকের আখ্যানভাগ জুনো, মিনার্ভা ও ভীনাসের কলহঘটিত কিন্দদন্তীর অনুরূপে রচিত; কৃষ্ণকুমারী-নাটক একটি রাজপুত কাহিনী অবলম্বনে রচিত। সুতরাং দেখা যাইতেছে যে, আখ্যায়িকার পরিকল্পনায় মধুসূদনের বিশেষ কোনও মৌলিকতা নাই। অথচ কোনও দিক্ দিয়াও নাটকগুলি খুব উৎকৃষ্ট নহে। শুধু, কৃষ্ণকুমারী-নাটক বাংলার প্রথম

* রবীন্দ্রনাথের গিটি “চলার পথে” (চৈত্র, ১০৪৫)।

বিষাদাস্ত্র নাটক ও পদ্মাবতী-নাটক প্রথম অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দে রচিত নাটক বলিয়া “টেকনিক”এর দিক্ দিয়া খানিকটা নূতনত্বের দাবী করিতে পারে।

শশ্মিষ্ঠা মধুসূদনের প্রথম নাটক। ইহার আখ্যানভাগ মহাভারত হইতে গৃহীত। ঘটনার সন্নিবেশে মধুসূদনের বিশেষ কোনও ক্রটি হয় নাই। যোগীন্দ্রনাথ বসু মনে করেন যে, শশ্মিষ্ঠার প্রতি দৈত্যরাজের নির্বাসন দণ্ডাজ্ঞা একটি শ্রেষ্ঠ নাটকোচিত অংশ এবং ইহা বাদ দেওয়াতে শশ্মিষ্ঠার অঙ্গহানি হইয়াছে। কিন্তু আমাদের তাহা মনে হয় না। একটির পর একটি ঘটনা যে ভাবে সন্নিবিষ্ট হইয়াছে তাহাতে কাহিনীর অগ্রগতি কোথাও ধামে নাই, কোথাও অনাবশ্যক ভাবে দ্রুত হয় নাই। এই আখ্যায়িকার কেবল একটি গুরুতর দোষ লক্ষিত হয়। শশ্মিষ্ঠার সঙ্গে রাজা যযাতির প্রণয়ের চিত্র অঙ্কিত হইয়াছে তৃতীয় অঙ্কে শেষে। চতুর্থ অঙ্কের প্রথমে দেখিতে পাই যে শশ্মিষ্ঠার তিনটি সন্তান জন্মবার পর দেবযানী রাজা ও শশ্মিষ্ঠার প্রণয়ের কথা সহসা জানিতে পারেন। ইহা সম্পূর্ণভাবে অবিশ্বাস্য। শশ্মিষ্ঠা-নাটকে আরেকটি প্রধান দোষ এই যে নায়িকা শশ্মিষ্ঠা কোথাও প্রাধান্য পান নাই, তিনি সর্বদাই দেবযানীর আড়ালে পড়িয়া গিয়াছেন। পিতার আদেশে তিনি দেবযানীর সেবা করিয়াছেন যযাতির প্রতি তাঁহার যে প্রণয় সঞ্চার হয় তাহাও অতিশয় ভীৰু ও নম্র। তিনি কোথাও নিজেকে পুরোভাগে স্থাপিত করিতে পারেন নাই। তাঁহার নম্রতা, আন্তরিকতা, সঙ্কুচিত নম্র প্রণয়-সম্ভাষণ আমাদের চিত্ত আকর্ষণ করে। কিন্তু নাটকে বর্ণিত ঘটনার সঙ্গে তাঁহার চরিত্রের সংযোগ খুব ঘনিষ্ঠ নহে। নাটকটি তাঁহার নামানুসারে রচিত হইলেও তিনি কোথাও নায়িকার উপযুক্ত আসন পান নাই। তাঁহার চরিত্রের সঙ্গে ঘটনাবলীর একটা কোথাও গভীর নহে।

নাটকের মধ্যে প্রধান চরিত্র দেবযানী ও তাঁহার পিতা শুক্রাচার্য। দেবযানীর চরিত্রের মধ্যে প্রেম, ঘৃণা ও হিংসার চিত্র আঁকা হইয়াছে। কিন্তু এই তিনটি প্রবৃত্তির সংঘর্ষ ও সন্মিলনের চিত্র পরিস্ফুট হয় নাই। মনুজ-চরিত্রের প্রধান গুণ ইহার অনন্তসাধারণ বৈচিত্র্য, নানা প্রবৃত্তির সন্নিবেশ। কিন্তু দেবযানীর মধ্যে দেখিতে পাই, একটির পর একটি প্রবৃত্তি তাঁহাকে আচ্ছন্ন করিয়া রাখিয়াছে। আবার একটি প্রবৃত্তির অবসানে আরেকটির প্রভাব প্রবল হইয়াছে। যখন যযাতির প্রতি ক্রোধের সঞ্চার হইয়াছে, তখন পূর্ব-প্রণয়ের

সমস্ত চিত্র বিলুপ্ত হইয়াছে। ইহাকে স্বাভাবিক বলিয়া মনে করা যায় না। দেবযানীর পিতা শুক্রাচার্যের চরিত্রও বিশ্বাসযোগ্য নহে। তাঁহার ক্ষমতা অননুসাধারণ। কিন্তু তিনি অতি সামান্য কারণে ক্রোধে অসংযত হইয়া পড়েন। অগাধ চরিত্রগুলি বিচার করিলেও এইরূপ অপরিণতির চিত্র দেখা যাইবে।

মধুসূদন হিন্দুধর্মকে অনেকটা নির্লিপ্ত দৃষ্টিতে দেখিতে পারিয়াছেন। এই জন্য তিনি রাম অপেক্ষা রাবণকে শ্রেষ্ঠ আসন দিয়াছেন। এইখানেও দেখিতে পাই, সর্বাপেক্ষা মধুরতম চিত্র দৈত্যরাজকন্যা শর্মিষ্ঠা ও তাহার শুভানুধ্যায়ী বকাসুর; বকাসুরের চরিত্র নাটকে প্রধান নহে, এবং ইহা পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খরূপে চিত্রিত হয় নাই। কিন্তু এই চরিত্রটি অতিশয় মধুর ও চিত্তাকর্ষক।

পদ্মাবতী-নাটক শর্মিষ্ঠার অবাবহিত পরে রচিত। পূর্বেই বলা হইয়াছে যে ইহার উপাখ্যান গ্রীক পুরাণের অনুকরণে রচিত। দেবদেবীগণ রক্তমঞ্চে অবতীর্ণ হইয়াছেন বলিয়া আখ্যায়িকায় বহু অসম্ভব ঘটনার সমাবেশ হইয়াছে। আখ্যায়িকা-রচনায় মধুসূদনের কোনও মৌলিকতা নাই। শচী, মুরঙ্গা, রতি, ইন্দ্রনীল ও পদ্মাবতী যথাক্রমে জুনো, মিনার্ভা, ভীনাস, প্যারিস ও হেলেনের অনুকরণে পরিকল্পিত। গ্রীক উপাখ্যানের সঙ্গে পার্থক্য এই যে, মধুসূদনের নাটক বিষাদান্ত নহে। ট্রয় যুদ্ধের অবসানে হেলেন তাঁহার পূর্ব স্বামীর নিকট ফিরিয়া গিয়াছেন, প্যারিস তাঁহাকে পায় নাই। কিন্তু ইন্দ্রনীল ও পদ্মাবতীর মিলন চিরস্থায়ী হইয়াছে। এবং পদ্মাবতীর মধ্যে মুরঙ্গা তাঁহার হারানো মেয়ে বিজয়ার সন্ধান পাইয়াছেন। ঘটনার সন্নিবেশে পদ্মাবতী শর্মিষ্ঠা অপেক্ষা শ্রেষ্ঠ। ইহার মধ্যে স্বর্গপুরীর ও মনুষ্যের অসংখ্য কার্যকলাপের বর্ণনা আছে, কিন্তু নাটকটি এরূপ সুগঠিত, একটির পর একটি স্তর এমন অনিবার্য ভাবে আসিয়াছে যে আমরা উপাখ্যানটিকে সহজেই গ্রহণ করিতে পারি। চরিত্র সৃষ্টির দিক দিয়া বিচার করিলে পদ্মাবতীকে উচ্চশ্রেণীর নাটক বলিয়া মনে করা যাইতে পারে না। ইহার অধিকাংশ চরিত্রই একটানা ভাবে আঁকা। পরস্পর-বিরুদ্ধ ভাবের একত্র-সমাবেশ নাটকের প্রধান গুণ, কিন্তু শচী, রতি, ইন্দ্রনীল ও পদ্মাবতীর মধ্যে এই বৈচিত্র্য নাই। শুধু মুরঙ্গার মধ্যে পরস্পর-বিরুদ্ধ প্রবৃত্তির সংঘর্ষের আভাস পাওয়া যায়। মুরঙ্গা শচীর সঙ্গে একযোগে ইন্দ্রনীলের সর্বনাশ সাধন করিতে অগ্রসর হইয়াছিলেন,

কিন্তু তিনি শতীর স্থায় প্রতিহিংসাপরায়ণ নহেন এবং পদ্মাবতীকে দেখিবামাত্রই অজ্ঞাতসারে তাহার স্তম্ভ মাতৃজ জাগিয়া উঠিল। প্রতিহিংসা ও মাতৃস্নেহের সামঞ্জস্যের যে চিত্র আঁকা হইয়াছে তাহা খুব পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খ নহে, কিন্তু ইহার মধ্যে প্রকৃত নাট্যকোচিত গুণের আভাস পাওয়া যায়, এবং এইখানেই নাট্যকার মধুসূদনের মৌলিক প্রতিভার শ্রেষ্ঠ পরিচয়।

কৃষ্ণকুমারী-নাটকের কাহিনী ঐতিহাসিক। ইহার মধ্যে কোনও অসম্ভব বা অপ্রাকৃত ঘটনা নাই। শুধু এক যায়গায় মধুসূদন ইতিহাসের পরিবর্তন করিয়াছেন। রাজপুত কাহিনীতে আমরা দেখিতে পাই কৃষ্ণকুমারী বিষপান করিয়া আত্মহত্যা করিয়াছিলেন—এখানে রাজা ভীমসিংহ ও বলেন্দ্রসিংহ কৃষ্ণকুমারীকে হত্যা করিতে সক্ষম করিয়াছিলেন এবং কৃষ্ণকুমারী খড়্গের সাহায্যে নিজের মৃত্যু ঘটাইয়াছিলেন। এই পরিবর্তন মধুসূদনের নাট্যপ্রতিভার পরিচয় দেয় না। কৃষ্ণকুমারী স্বেচ্ছায় মৃত্যু বরণ করিয়াছিলেন। তিনি নীরবে গোপনে সকল বিবাদের সমাধান করিবেন ইহাই স্বাভাবিক ও সুসঙ্গত। দুই রাজভ্রাতা একত্র হইয়া নিরুপায় রাজকুমারীকে হত্যা করিতে ষড়যন্ত্র করিবেন এবং মৃত্যুর পূর্বে ও পরে তেদোক্তি করিবেন—ইহা একেবারে অসম্ভব ও অস্বাভাবিক না হইলেও সহজ ও সুন্দর নহে। মধুসূদন অতিনাটকীয় উচ্ছ্বাসের অভিব্যক্তি দেওয়ার প্রলোভন সংবরণ করিতে পারেন নাই। যে সংযম ও সাক্ষেতিকতা নাট্যপ্রতিভার শ্রেষ্ঠ লক্ষণ, মধুসূদন তাহা আয়ত্ত করিতে পারেন নাই।

ঘটনার সন্নিবেশে এবং আখ্যানের পরিকল্পনায় এই নাটকখানি পূর্ববর্তী নাটক দুইখানি অপেক্ষা আংশিকভাবে শ্রেষ্ঠ হইলেও কৃষ্ণকুমারী উচ্চশ্রেণীর নাটক বলিয়া পরিগণিত হইতে পারে না। ভীমসিংহ, বলেন্দ্রসিংহ এবং মানসিংহ রাজপুত বীরগণের প্রতিনিধিরূপে পরিকল্পিত হইয়াছেন। ইঁহার বীরত্বের প্রতিমূর্তি। কিন্তু ইঁহাদের চরিত্র একটানা ভাবে আঁকা হইয়াছে। ইঁহাদের ব্যক্তিগত বৈশিষ্ট্য পরিস্ফুট হয় নাই। রাজা জগৎসিংহের চরিত্রে খানিকটা বৈচিত্র্যের সন্ধান পাওয়া যায়। তিনি কামুক অথচ বীরোচিত গুণের অধিকারী। কিন্তু কেমন করিয়া এই দুই পরস্পরবিরুদ্ধ প্রবৃত্তির সামঞ্জস্য হইল তাহা স্পষ্ট করিয়া দেখান হয় নাই। রাজা জগৎসিংহকে সম্পূর্ণ বিশ্বাসযোগ্য চরিত্র বলিয়া মনে হয় না।

নায়িকা কৃষ্ণকুমারী কুসুমের মত কোমল। কিন্তু বিপদের সময় তিনি অসাধারণ সাহস, আত্মত্যাগ ও দৃঢ়তার পরিচয় দিয়াছেন। তিনি নায়িকা হইলেও যথোচিত প্রাধান্য পান নাই। নাটকের অধিকাংশ স্থান জুড়িয়া বসিয়াছেন জগৎসিংহ, মদনিকা প্রভৃতি। তাঁহার চরিত্রের খুব সূক্ষ্ম বিশ্লেষণ দেওয়া হয় নাই। বিশেষতঃ যে ভাবে মানসিংহের প্রতি তাঁহার প্রেম সঞ্চারিত হইয়াছে, তাহা নাটকোচিত বলিয়া মনে হয় না। অবরোধ-অস্ত্রালাল-বাসিনী হিন্দুকুমারীর পক্ষে প্রণয়াসক্তির অবকাশ খুব কম। সেইজন্য মধুসূদন এই অদ্ভুত চিত্র আঁকিতে বাধ্য হইয়াছেন। কিন্তু ইহাকে সম্পূর্ণ বিশ্বাসযোগ্য করিতে পারেন নাই। বিলাসবতী, ধনদাস ও মদনিকা সম্পর্কিত আখ্যায়িকাটি খুব কৌতুকাবহ। বিশেষতঃ চতুরা মদনিকার বুদ্ধিমত্তার ও প্রত্যাংগমতিত্বের চিত্র খুব উজ্জ্বল হইয়াছে। ক্ষিপ্রগতি, কৌশলময়ী, ছদ্মবেশিনী মদনিকা শেক্সপিয়রের নায়িকাগণের কথা স্মরণ করাইয়া দেয়। বিলাসবতীর চরিত্রেও সূক্ষ্ম বিশ্লেষণের বিশেষ পরিচয় নাই। কিন্তু তাহাকে হৃদয়হীন সাধারণ বারান্ধনা হিসাবে কল্পনা করা হয় নাই। মধুসূদন তাহাকে একান্ত অনুরক্ত প্রণয়িনী রূপে চিত্রিত করিয়াছেন। পদস্থলিতা রমণীর প্রতি সহানুভূতি শরৎচন্দ্রের শ্রেষ্ঠ দান—মধুসূদনের বিলাসবতীতে শরৎচন্দ্রের নায়িকার ক্ষীণ পূর্বাভাস পাওয়া যায়।

শর্মিষ্ঠা-নাটকে ও পদ্মাবতী-নাটকে দুঃখের কাহিনী আছে, কিন্তু ইহার মিলনান্ত। কৃষ্ণকুমারী খাঁটি ট্রাজেডী। ইহা ছাড়া মধুসূদন দুইখানি প্রহসনও রচনা করিয়াছেন মধুসূদনের প্রতিভা নাট্যরচনায় চরম বিকাশ লাভ করে নাই সত্য, কিন্তু তিনি যে সকল শ্রেণীর নাটক রচনা করিয়াছিলেন ইহা তাঁহার প্রতিভার বহুমুখীনতা প্রমাণ করে। “একেই কি বলে সভাভা” এবং “বুড়ো শালিখের ঘাড়ে রোঁ”—তে ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর বাঙ্গালী সমাজের দুই শ্রেণীর চরিত্রের উপর তীব্র কশাঘাত করা হইয়াছে। যে হিন্দুসমাজ বিচার ও বিবেককে বিসর্জন দিয়া তুচ্ছ আচারকে প্রাধান্য দিয়াছে সেই সমাজে যে বহু কপটাচারী, ধর্মহীন লোকের সৃষ্টি হইবে ইহাতে বিশ্বাসের কিছুই নাই। পূর্বের জমিদার সম্প্রদায় সনাতন ধর্মের প্রধান পৃষ্ঠপোষক ছিলেন। অধিকাংশ জমিদারই ছিলেন অলস, অশিক্ষিত ও প্রজাপীড়ক। এই শ্রেণীর একজন প্রতিনিধিকে কেন্দ্র করিয়া মধুসূদন তাঁহার বুড়ো শালিখের ঘাড়ে রোঁ।

রচনা করিয়াছেন। কপট, কামুক জমিদারের চিত্র দুই একটি রেখার সাহায্যে তীব্র ও উজ্জ্বল হইয়া উঠিয়াছে।

প্রহসনে বিস্তৃত বর্ণনা ও বিশ্লেষণের অবকাশ নাই। ইহা সত্ত্বেও অগাণ্ড চিত্রগুলিও পরিস্ফুট হইয়াছে। প্রহসনের উপসংহারে পুঁটীর মধ্যে ধর্ম্যবোধ জাগরণের যে আভাস পাই তাহা অতিশয় সঙ্গত হইয়াছে। ঘটনার সন্নিবেশ ও অদ্ভুত অবস্থার পরিকল্পনা এই প্রহসনটিকে অতিশয় চিত্তাকর্ষক করিয়াছে। ঘটনার সঙ্গে চরিত্রের সংযোগ স্তরকোশলে রক্ষিত হইয়াছে—বিশেষ করিয়া একটি দৃশ্য পাঠকের চিত্তে গভীর ভাবে অঙ্কিত হইয়া থাকে। ভক্তপ্রসাদ ধর্ম্যহীন কিন্তু আচারপরায়ণ। এই মিথ্যা আচারনিষ্ঠা তাঁহার মনে মিথ্যা কুসংস্কারের সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে। এই জগৎ তিনি অতি সহজেই হানিফকে ভূত বলিয়া বিশ্বাস করিলেন এবং “বুড়ো শালিখ”এর পরাজয়ও সম্পূর্ণ হইল।

একেই কি বলে সভ্যতায় উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর হিন্দুসমাজের আরেকটি প্রাস্ত চিত্রিত হইয়াছে। ইংরাজী শিক্ষার প্রথমযুগে সাহেবিয়ানার সঙ্গে যে সব অনাচার হিন্দুসমাজে প্রবেশ করিয়াছিল, এই প্রহসনে তাহারই দীর্ঘ বিজ্ঞপাত্মক বর্ণনা দেওয়া হইয়াছে। এই প্রহসনটি “বুড়ো শালিখের ঘাড়ে রৌঁ”—এর মত সুন্দর নহে। জ্ঞানতরঙ্গিনী সভায় বাবাজীর উপস্থিতি, যুবতীদের গৃহিণীকে কঁাকি দেওয়ার চেষ্টা, কঠা মহাশয় ও কালীনাথের সাক্ষাৎ—এই সকল দৃশ্যে কৌতুকসৃষ্টি ও চরিত্রবিশ্লেষণের বিশেষ অবকাশ ছিল। কিন্তু একটি দৃশ্যও জমিয়া উঠে নাই। মধুসূদন তাঁহা কশাঘাত করিয়াছেন কিন্তু শিল্পকৌশলের দিক দিয়া বিচার করিলে তাঁহা এই ব্যঙ্গচিত্রকে সম্পূর্ণ সার্থক বলা যায় না।

অনুবর্তী কবিগণের উপর মধুসূদনের প্রভাব

মধুসূদন তাঁহার অনুবর্তী কবিগণের উপরে গভীর প্রভাব প্রতিকলিত করিয়াছেন, যে অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দের তিনি প্রথম প্রবর্তনা করেন, তাহা বাংলা কাব্যে প্রচলিত হইয়াছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বাংলার ছন্দের অপরিসীম পরিবর্তন সাধন করিয়াছেন, তাঁহার সর্বব্যাপী প্রতিভা বাংলার ছন্দকে বিপুল ঐশ্বর্য্য দিয়াছে, কিন্তু তিনিও অমিতাক্ষর রচনায় মধুসূদনের প্রবর্তিত রীতিরই অনুসরণ করিয়াছেন, নূতন কোনও ভঙ্গী প্রচলিত করিতে চাহেন নাই। ছন্দের কথা ছাড়িয়া দিলে, মধুসূদনের প্রভাবকে দুই দিক হইতে বিচার করা যাইতে পারে। তিনি মহাকাব্য ও গীতিকাব্য উভয়ই রচনা করিয়াছেন। গীতিকাব্য রচনার স্রোত অব্যাহত রহিয়াছে। হেমচন্দ্র, নবীনচন্দ্র, বিহারীলাল, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরবর্তী কবিগণ সকলেই অল্লাধিক গীতিকাব্য রচনা করিয়াছেন। এই দিক দিয়া বিচার করিতে গেলে “গীতিকবি মধুসূদন”এর প্রভাব “মহাকবি মধুসূদন”এর প্রভাব অপেক্ষা স্থায়ী হইয়াছে। বিশেষ করিয়া, বাংলার প্রেমের কাব্য ও চতুর্দশপদীতে মধুসূদনের ব্রজাঙ্গনা, বীরাঙ্গনা ও চতুর্দশপদী কবিতাবলীর প্রভাব পরিলক্ষিত হয়। “গাঙ্গারীর আবেদন,” “কচ ও দেবযানী সংবাদ” বীরাঙ্গনার কথা স্মরণ করাইয়া দেয়। ব্রজাঙ্গনা ও চতুর্দশপদীর প্রভাব আরও বিস্তৃতভাবে পরিব্যাপ্ত হইয়াছে।

মেঘনাদবধ-কাব্য মধুসূদনের সর্বাশ্রেষ্ঠ রচনা এবং মধুসূদন মহাকাব্য রচয়িতা হিসাবে প্রথম প্রসিদ্ধি লাভ করেন। তাঁহার অব্যবহিত পরবর্ত্তী কবি হেমচন্দ্র ও নবীনচন্দ্র মধুসূদনের দৃষ্টান্তে অনুপ্রাণিত হইয়াই মহাকাব্য রচনা করিয়া থাকিবেন। হেমচন্দ্র নিজেই মধুসূদনের নিকট তাঁহার গভীর শ্রদ্ধা জ্ঞাপন করিয়াছেন,

“সাহিত্য কুশমে প্রমত্ত মধুপ

বজ্রের উজ্জ্বল রবি ;

তোমার অভাবে দেশ অন্ধকার

“श्रीमधुसूदन कवि।”

শ্রীমতী নীহার দাশগুপ্ত

মধুসূদনের অকালমৃত্যুতে হেমচন্দ্রের হৃদয় সত্যসত্যই ব্যথিত হইয়াছিল। মধুসূদনের প্রতিভার আশামুরূপ সমাদর হইল না। দেখিয়া তিনি আক্ষেপ করিয়াছেন,

“হবে কি সেদিন এ গোড় মাঝে
পূরিবে তোমার আশা,
বুঝিবে কি খন দিয়াছ ভাগুরে
উজ্জ্বল করিয়া ভাষা ।
হায় মা ভারতি ! চিরদিন তোর
কেন এ কুখ্যাতি ভাবে ?
যে জন সেবিবে ও পদ যুগল
সেই সে দরিত্র হবে ?”

হেমচন্দ্রের ব্রহ্মসংহারের সহিত মেঘনাদবধ ও তিলোত্তমাসম্ভব কাব্যের তুলনা করিলে মধুসূদনের প্রভাব অস্বীকার্য হইতে পারে। অবশ্য ইহা স্বীকার করিতে হইবে যে মধুসূদনের প্রতিভার ও হেমচন্দ্রের প্রতিভার মধ্যে যথেষ্ট পার্থক্য ছিল। মধুসূদন হিন্দু কিস্তিদৃষ্টি ও পুরাণবর্ণিত দেবদেবীর প্রতি ভক্তিমান ছিলেন না, সুতরাং তাঁহার প্রতিভা মেঘনাদ ও রাবণের গৌরবের চিত্র আঁকিতে নিয়োজিত হইয়াছে। হেমচন্দ্র ব্রতের প্রতি অবিচার করেন নাই--কিন্তু তিনি দেবদেবীর চিত্রও উজ্জ্বল ও সমৃদ্ধ করিয়াছেন। এই কারণেই মধুসূদনের ও হেমচন্দ্রের মহাকাব্যে যথেষ্ট বৈসাদৃশ্য পরিলক্ষিত হয়। কিন্তু হেমচন্দ্র যে দেবাসুরের যুদ্ধ অবলম্বন করিয়া মহাকাব্য রচনা করিয়াছেন ইহার প্রেরণা তিনি মধুসূদনের নিকট হইতে পাইয়া থাকিবেন।

নবীনচন্দ্রের সর্বাধিক প্রসিদ্ধ কাব্য পলাশীর যুদ্ধে মধুসূদনের প্রভাব স্পষ্ট নহে। কিন্তু তাঁহার পৌরাণিক কাব্যত্রয়োতে (রৈবতক, কুরুক্ষেত্র, প্রভাস) মধুসূদনের প্রভাব দ্রোণীয়মান। মধুসূদনের দ্বারা প্রভাবান্বিত হইয়াই তিনি পৌরাণিক উপাখ্যান অবলম্বন করিয়া এই সকল মহাকাব্য রচনা করিয়াছেন। এই সকল কাব্যে অনার্যের প্রতি যে গভীর সহানুভূতির পরিচয় পাওয়া যায় তাহাও মধুসূদনের প্রভাবের পরিচয় দেয়। মধুসূদন রাবণ ও মেঘনাদের সহানুভূতির পূর্ণ চিত্র আঁকিয়া বাংলা কবিতার পরিসর বিস্তৃত করিয়া দিয়াছেন। যে কারণেই হউক মহাকাব্যের ধারা বঙ্গসাহিত্যে স্থায়ী হয় নাই।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বীররসাত্মক মহাকাব্য রচনা করেন নাই। বর্তমান কালে মধুসূদনের জীবনচরিত লেখক যোগীন্দ্রনাথ বসু “পৃথ্বীরাজ” ও “শিবাজী” রচনা করিয়া মহাকাব্যের ধারাকে পুনরুজ্জীবিত করিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু সে চেষ্টা সফল হয় নাই। মধুসূদনের সর্কশ্ৰেষ্ঠ কাব্য যে ধারার প্রবর্তন করিয়াছিল তাহা শুষ্ক হইয়া গিয়াছে।

উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর একান্ত শেষভাগে জিশানচন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, অধরলাল সেন প্রমুখ কবিরা অ-পৌরাণিক বিষয় লইয়া মহাকাব্য রচনায় হাত দিয়াছিলেন ; তাঁহাদের সে প্রচেষ্টাও সার্থক হয় নাই। মধুসূদনের কাব্য ও অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দকে ব্যঙ্গ করিয়াও কেহ কেহ লালিকা অর্থাৎ Parody কাব্য লিখিয়াছিলেন ; সেগুলির মূল্যও নিতান্ত অকিঞ্চিৎকর।

উপসংহার

মধুসূদন বাংলার একজন শ্রেষ্ঠ কবি ; তাঁহার মেঘনাদবধ কাব্য মহাকাব্য হিসাবে বঙ্গসাহিত্যে অদ্বিতীয়। তিনি বাংলার কাব্য-সাহিত্যে অমিতাক্ষর ছন্দ ও সনেটের প্রবর্তনা করিয়াছেন। শর্মিষ্ঠা বাংলার অশ্রুতম প্রথম নাটক এবং কৃষ্ণকুমারী-নাটক বাংলার প্রথম ট্রাজেডী। এই ভাবে বিচার করিলে মধুসূদনের দানের গণনা শেষ করা যায় না। আমাদের মনে হয়, মধুসূদনের সৃষ্ট সাহিত্যের শ্রেষ্ঠ লক্ষণ এই যে তাঁহার প্রতিভায় প্রাচী ও প্রতীচীর অপূর্ব সমন্বয় হইয়াছে। যে হিন্দুয়ানী বিচারহীন আচারে পর্য্যবসিত হইয়াছিল তাহা যে কুরুপ হীন আকার ধারণ করিতে পারে তাহা তিনি বুড়ো শালিখের ঘাড়ে রৌ-তে দেখাইয়াছেন, আবার অতিরিক্ত বিদেশীয়ানার বাজ করিয়াছেন একেই কি বলে সভ্যতায়। ইহা হইতে মনে হয় যে প্রাচ্য ও পাশ্চাত্য উভয় সমাজেরই দোষগুণের প্রতি তাঁহার দৃষ্টি সমান জাগরুক ছিল এবং তিনি নিজেই এই উভয় সমাজের দোষগুণের সামঞ্জস্যের শ্রেষ্ঠ প্রতীক। তাঁহার মহাকাব্য বিদেশী আদর্শে রচিত, কিন্তু তাঁহার বিষয়বস্তু গৃহীত হইয়াছে হিন্দুর পুরাণ হইতে। তিনি প্রবাসে বসিয়া বিদেশী কবির অনুসরণে সনেট রচনা করিয়াছেন স্বদেশীর ক্ষুদ্রাতিক্ষুদ্র আচার অনুষ্ঠান লইয়া। বীরাজনা প্রভৃতি খণ্ডকাব্যের মধ্যেও এই সামঞ্জস্যের পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। এই সময়ের প্রকৃষ্টতম উদাহরণ পদ্মাবতী-নাটক। এই নাটকের কথাবস্তুর ভাব (idea) গ্রীক পুরাণ হইতে আহরণ করা হইয়াছে, কিন্তু তাহা এমনভাবে দেশীয় পুরাণের ছাঁদে রূপান্তরিত হইয়াছে যে বিদেশী বলিয়া চিনিবার উপায় নাই। এই অপূর্ব সমন্বয় যাহা মহাকাব্য হইতে খণ্ডকাব্য, নাটক, প্রহসন পর্য্যন্ত সর্বত্র পরিব্যাপ্ত হইয়াছে ইহাই মধুসূদনের প্রতিভার শ্রেষ্ঠ পরিচয় এবং এই দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীই বঙ্গসাহিত্যে মধুসূদনের অন্ততম শ্রেষ্ঠ দান।

Associate Life in the *Gama*

BY

ATINDRA NATH BOSE, M.A.

It has long been the practice among prominent Indologists like Fick and Rhys Davids to hold that the *Gāmabhojaka* or the *Gāmika* of the Buddhist literature was a typical product of the popular and corporate life of the ancient village system. The evidence of the Pali works, especially of the *Jātakas* belie this theory. Taking into consideration his powers and functions from every point of view, the advent of the *bhojaka* whether as an official or as a non-official cannot be held to have been a welcome feature in India's village economy.¹ But she was spared the baneful conclusion of the feudal order—exaltation of landlords into a parasytic nobility and reduction of peasants into serfdom. The *bhojaka* had no proprietary rights over land, no seigniorial rights conferred with royal deeds, the so-called rights of confiscation, eviction, escheat, etc., or of arbitrary levies like the *sālāmi*, *ābwāb*, *bhet* or *begār* or the *bovine*, *banalité*, *péage*, *gabelle*, monopoly of the dove-cote and so on.² The peasantry lost none of their rights on their freehold under a royal charter: they only gave the tithe due to the king to another man. Nor were perhaps their estates liable to summary sale or attachment for arrears of revenue. The periodical oppression and illegal exactions which they had to bear with could not reach the inner spring of rural life and sap its vitality. It lay deeper in the healthy spirit fostered by the tribal community, of discipline, fellowship, liberty and public conscience

¹ See my article in "Indian Historical Quarterly," XIII, 4.

² Inscriptions show that the immunities of royal assignments were much extended in later time.

safeguard and strength of the villagers—*manto ca parittaṇ ca vaddhin cā'ti* (200).

They are given by the king the village, the elephant and the *bhojaka* as slave for reward. Then they built a large hall at the meeting of the four highways. Even women are very keen to participate in this corporate enterprise.

“They had benches put up and jars of water set inside, providing also a constant supply of boiled rice. Round the hall they built a wall with a gate, strewing the space inside the wall with sand and planting a row of fan-palms outside.”

“*āsanaphalakāni santharitvā pāṇiyacātiyo ṭhapetvā yagubhattaṃ nibandhiṃsu sālāṃ pākāreṇa parikkhipitvā dvāraṃ yojetvā anto pākāre vālukaṃ āharitvā bahi pākāre tālapantiṃ ropesum*”³ (201).

The hall was completed with the construction of a flower and fruit garden and a lotus-pond.

The Mahā-ummagga Jātaka hints at the manifold purpose served by the public hall or *sāla*, the throbbing heart-centre of the village organism. Bodhisatta as a boy collects subscriptions from the playmates and gets a hall built in the eastern suburbs (*pācinayavamajjhaka*—later referred to as a *gāma*) of Mithilā with special apartments for ordinary strangers, destitute men, destitute women, stranger Buādhist monks and Brāhmaṇas, foreign merchants with their wives, all these with doors opening outside (*vahimukhāni*). A public place for sports (*kiḷamaṇḍalaṃ*) a court of justice (*vinicchayaṃ*), a convocation hall (*dhamma-sabhaṃ*); beautiful pictures, “a tank with 1,000 bends in the bank and 100 bathing ghats” (*sahassavaṃkaṃ sataṭṭhaṃ pokkharāṇi*) covered by lotuses and bounded by a park, and an almshouse (*dānabhaddaṃ*) gave completion to the building-scheme (VI. 333).

³ Cf. the rest-house of Pāṭaligāma where the *upāsakas* invited Buddha and his fraternity and strewed its floor with sand, placed seats in it, set up a waterpot and fixed an oil lamp (*āvasathāgāraṃ santharitvā āsanāni paññāpetvā udakamaṇikaṃ patiṭṭhapetvā telapāḍipam āropetvā*,—Mv. VI. 28.2; Ud. VIII. 6).

This is only the execution of the corporate rural ideal in a larger and perfected scale. The village *sāla* is thus a shelter for the stranded, an asylum for foreign visitors, an inn for travellers.⁴ For the villagers themselves, it is the centre for recreation, administrative affairs and religious discussion. Last but not least, here is organised the collective charity.

Collective Charity

For this specific purpose the villagers and townsfolk are often seen to combine. According to the *paccupannavatthu* of the *Susīma Jātaka*, the people of *Sāvatti* were used to practise charity by isolated families, or by grouping together into associations (*gaṇabandhanena vahu ekato hutvā*) or by clubbing together into streets (*vīthisabhāgena*) or by collection of subscriptions from among all the citizens (*sakalanagaravāsino chandakaṃ saṃharitvā*, II. 45). The *Kalpadruma Avadāna* attests how the magnets of *Sāvatti* gave a united front against the incursion of famine on their less fortunate brethren. The people of *Rājagaha* followed suit and used to combine for purpose of almsgiving. The subscriptions were raised in money or in kind. Here, as in *Sāvatti*, apparently this was the general custom in all self-governing areas, on any dispute a division was called and the voice of the majority prevailed (II. 196). Probably this was an imitation of the *yebhuyyasikā* or decision by majority vote as laid down by Buddha in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (Cv. IV. 9, 14. 24), on the procedure of the assembly of the *Samgha*.

Educational Establishments

Analogous to the charitable works were the educational establishments maintained by the individual or collective aid

⁴ Cf. the *āvasathāgāra* or village rest-house in *Mv.* VI. 28.2. and *Dn.* XVI. I. 20. Here rice-meal is supplied to travellers—*Vin. pātimokkha*, *pācittiya*, 31. These 'choultries' were not less frequently built by private munificence.

of the people. The Losaka Jātaka narrates that Bodhisatta ran an academy of 500 poor Brāhmaṇas at Benares and the townsfolk supplied meals to poor lads and had them taught free (*tadā bārāṇasivāsino duggatānaṃ paribbayaṃ datvā sippaṃ sikkhāpenti*). The villagers offer a miniature replica of the municipal institution: for Mittavindaka is paid by the residents of a *paccantagāma* to teach them what was true doctrine and what was false (presumably on the strength of his reference as a pupil of Bodhisatta) and given a hut to live in at the entrance of the village (*gāma-vāsino 'amhākam susāsanam dussāsanam āroceyyāsīti 'mittavindakassa bhatim datvā taṃ gāmadvāre kuṭikāya vasāpesuṃ*). But Mittavindaka's evil star brought the king's wrath on the village and the villagers after holding a conference drove him out with blows (I. 239). Very similarly another group of villagers paid a logician (*takka-paṇḍita*) and settled him at village entrance in a hut to teach them lucky and unlucky seasons (*suyuttaṃ duyuttaṃ*, I. 296). In other places villagers give their quota in the form of eatables for the upkeep of a sylvan school in the vicinity (III. 537) or for the maintenance of a learned preceptor (II. 72). Individual villagers (IV. 391) or houses or *kulas* (I. 318) sometimes treated teachers and students in banquets.

Religious Bequests

Closely akin to the charitable and educational work, the religious bequests were another channel in which the associate enterprise of villagers found vent and expression. In one case we see them putting off under one pretext or another the construction of a cell for a Brother who had paid for it (I. 215). But inscriptions on the votive offerings of the Sānchi Topes (which are placed in the 3rd century B.C.) are living illustrations of this side of village activity. Here we have:—

Vejaṣasa gāmasa dānam (Tope I., No. 17)

Padukulikāya gāmasa dānam (II. 1)

Asvavatiya gāmasa dānam (I. 215)

Chunivamoragiri gāmasa dānam (II. 49)

Nāsikakanaṃ Dambhikagāmasa dānam (Nasik Cave In.
20. VI)¹

rendered by Senart as gift of the village of Dambhika of the Nasik people :

Gifts were also made from among restricted associations, committees (*goṭhi*) or families (*kula*) :

Gift of the Bauddha *goṭhi* from Dhamavaḍhanana (I 25, 26)

„ „ Barulamisa „ Vedisa (I. 51)

„ „ Vākiliyas from Ujjein (27)

„ „ Kula of Dhamutara (I. 276)

„ „ sons of Disāgiri from Puruvida (I. 290)

„ Subhagā, Pusā, Nāgadata, Sagharakhita,

inhabitants of Kuraghara (I. 375).⁵

That the villagers did not content themselves by merely making over endowments and setting up temples is proved by the significant institution of the *goṭhi* which is explained by Bühler as a Committee of trustees in charge of a temple or of charitable institutions. Here the people sent their representatives to manage their endowments and guide their religious observances.

The entertainment of Buddha with his Fraternity by the faithful which became a general custom in the Gangetic provinces was performed sometimes by individuals, sometimes by families, sometimes by *gāmas* and even whole clans. A single family might make a house to house collection of food materials (Jāt. II. 85, Mv. VI. 37) or all the villagers might come forward (*ibid.*, 28.2 ; 33.1). The Mallas of Kusināra even make compacts that whoever does not join the reception shall be fined and that the members should regale the Saṃgha by rotation (*ibid.*, 36). Sometimes it was the turn of a section or

⁵ For further instances of this nature see Amarāvati Inscriptions, E. I., XV. 13. Also Bārhut—Karahakaṭa nigamasa dānam.

assembly (*pūga*, Cv. V. 6,2; 26; VIII. 4. 1). The corporate unity and homogeneity of faith among the villagers facilitated the conversion of villages *en masse* by Buddha repeatedly claimed in the Pali canon.

Economic Co-operation

The villagers were closely knit together by economic bonds of diverse sort. They maintained a common neat-herd to take charge of and graze their cattle in the adjoining pasture or forest (Jāt. I. 194, III. 149; An. I. 205; Rv. X. 19) on pay⁶ or on a share of the dairy produce which was standardised by specialists at 1/10 (Arth. III. 13; Nār. VI. 2-3; Yāj. II. 194). Traces of collective farming are not wanting and it would not be extravagant to conjecture that the (*gāmakhetta*) in which the several plots were demarcated by irrigation canals, was cultivated under collectivist initiative (Vr. XIV. 25, Arth. II. 10; Jāt. II. 109). The casual reference in the Jātakas to the ploughing festival (*vāppamaṅgala*, IV. 167, VI. 479), a great annual ceremony when the King held the plough along with the peasants,⁷ conjures up a cheerful associate life and a full realisation of the community of agricultural interests. That the village formed a compact self-centred unit is indicated by the Smṛti emphasis on village boundary and the frequent Pali reference to the village-gate (*gāmadvāra*, Cv. V. 24.1; Jāt. I. 239, V. 441; Mil. P. 365, etc.). The kings recognised the economic entity of a village and treated it as such. Vāśiṣṭha characterises it as corporate unity and speaks of collective fine imposed on it (III. 4). The Jātakas have many allusions to kings raising the tax of a village or exacting fines from it as a whole (I. 234, 239; III. 9).

⁶ This, according to Nārada, is a heifer annually for tending 100 cows, a milch cow for 200 and the right to milk all the cows every 8th day (VI. 10).

⁷ See S. Hardy, "Manual of Buddhism," p. 150.

Gāmakiccaṃ

In the Mahā-assāroha Jātaka as in the Kulāvaka Jātaka, the 30 inhabitants of a *paccantaḡāma*, here in Kāsi, “gathered together very early in the middle of the village to transact its business” (*te pāto va gāmamajjhe sannipatitvā gāmakiccaṃ karonti*, III. 8). When the village tax was increased the man who was the cause of the trouble was jointly induced by the villagers to go and see the unknown horseman and they provided him with the presents (*pañṇākāraṃ*) he required for the visit.

The quotations amply clarify what were the *gāmakammaṃ* or *gamakiccaṃ* to deliberate over which all the villagers assembled in the central hall. These comprised judicial functions,⁶ municipal work like irrigation, road-making, etc.; humanitarian and charitable activities, subsidising academic foundations; sacrificial performances, pious invitations and religious endowments with the formation of boards of trustees; examining the state of crops and incidents of general interest. Rural problems loomed large and from here started the ‘marches’ and deputations to the *bhojakas* or higher authorities urging relief against famine (Jāt. II. 135, 367; V. 193; VI. 487), beasts, robbers (Jāt. V. 459), *yakkhas* (Jāt. V. 22) and similar pests. Sometimes grave decisions were reached in this village council which infuriated peaceful masses into bloody revolt to pull down the instruments of autocracy and tyranny which

* This is conjectural. The *sabhā*, *parisa*, *rājakula* and *pūga* are given as assemblies which examine witnesses (Mn. 41.141). Later Smṛtis (Yāi, Nār. Vṛ), substitute *gaṇa*, *śreṇi*, and *kula* for the first three. The *sabhā* and the *gaṇa* fit in with the village assembly. There is also the express reference that a Brāhmaṇa must not take the food offered by those who are punished by a *gaṇa* or a village,—*ganagrāmābhi-śastanāṃ* (Mbh. XII- 37.80). In the Jātakas we have the solitary reference to the *vinicchayaṃ* (VI. 333) as part of the *sāla*, whereas the *bhojaka* appears as the habitual judge of village causes, enjoying fees and fines. He is more an official than a popular personality and has little association with the democratic rural apparatus (see my article in the “Indian Historical Quarterly,” *loc. cit.*). Did the *bhojaka* hold the pleas of the crown, and the village *sabhā* meet only to enforce common law and corporate obligations under the sanction of social ostracism ?

infringed their traditional rights and interests sanctified as common law.⁹

Industrial Villages

The industrial and professional *gāmas* of the Jātakas exhibit a closer bond and homogeneity than the agricultural *gāmas*. We have a fishing village of 1,000 families (*kulasahassavāse kevaṭṭagāme*) in Kosala of which the 1,000 fishermen used to go out in a body with their nets (I. 234). The anglers (*bālīsikā*) in another village are in the habit of sharing their prize as it appears from a ruse planned by one of them who had a snag in his tackle and took it to be a big fish: “puttakam mātu santikam pesetvā paṭivissakehi saddhim kalaham kārāpemi, evaṃ ito na koci koṭṭhāsam paccāsimissati” (I. 482). Four weavers in Benares used to divide their earnings in five shares, keeping four for themselves and giving one for charity (IV. 475). In the kingdom of Kāsi, a smith’s village of 1,000 houses (*kammāragāma*) was organised under a head (*jeṭṭhaka*, III, 281). Near Benares on the two sides of the Ganges were two villages of hunters (*nesādagāma*) with 500 families in each and each organised under a chief (VI. 71). Benares also offers the example of a village of carpenters (*vaddhakigāma*) with 500 members who organised into a body under a head, plied their trade and received wages together and led a common livelihood (I. 18).¹⁰

⁹ Instances of popular revolt against misrule are not wanting in the Brāhmaṇas and in the Jātakas where they sometimes expel or even execute their princes together with unpopular officials. The fear is portent in the Arthaśāstra (VI. 1), Manu (VII. 113) and Sukraniti (IV. 7. 838-39) all of which issue solemn warnings to the king against this grave retribution of tyranny. In the Anuśāsana-parva, Mahābhārata, armed revolt against and deposition of unprotecting sovereigns is definitely enjoined upon subjects (61. 32f.). The Ceylonese chronicles state that the kings of Magadha from Ajātaśatru to Nāgaśāsaka being all parricides the people banished the dynasty and raised the *amātya* Śuśunāga to the throne. The people of Taxila revolted against Asoka for official maladministration who sent prince Kuṣāla to restore order and good government (Raychaudhuri, “Political History of Ancient India,” 3rd edn., p. 245f.). See also Jāt. I. 326, III. 514, VI. 156, 493ff.

¹⁰ It is not to be assumed however that every such village with localised trade formed a close corporation (Jāt. II. 405, IV. 207, V. 337).

Similar references there are to villages of salt-makers (*loṇakāra*, Mn. 128, Jāt. III. 489), basket-makers (*naḷakāra*, Mn. 99), robbers (*cora*, Jāt. I. 297, IV. 430), actors (*naṭa*—see Bühler's note in E. I. I. 43) caravan-guards, Brāhmaṇas, *caṇḍālas* and outcasts. This isolation of crafts and professions and their concentration in fixed areas gave birth to the medley of castes and sub-castes which, formerly a more or less priestly hypothesis, now began to harden into rigid social partitions on the basis of occupations tightened with the bonds of heredity, endogamy and exogamy, rules of the table, etc. The corporate unity, combined with localisation of industry tended towards a narrowness and exclusivism whose dour consequences we are suffering for generations and centuries from the past.¹¹

The evidences of the Jātakas are fully corroborated in the Sāstra literature. In a rule of the Arthaśāstra (III. 10) it is presupposed that villagers may collectively employ a cultivator (*karṣaka*) on contract advancing wages and food and drink (cf. Yāj. II. 193), or a hireling for sacrificial performance (*prahavaneṣu*). The village collectively appropriates the fine imposed on a breach of the contract. It also appears that it was the compulsory duty of every villager to co-operate in the preparation of a public show (*prekṣāyāmanamśadah na prekṣeta*) and in beneficial works of public utility (*sarvahite ca karmaṇi*) on pain of fine calculated at double the aid due from him. A person undertaking a public concern must be similarly obeyed by all on pain of fine, Brāhmaṇas and even superior folk not excepted (cf. Yāj. II. 191; Viṣ. V. 73). Villages might also undertake the combined performance of a sacrifice. The chapter is closed with the quotation of a verse :

¹¹ N. Banerji throws out a plausible explanation of the rise of industrial *gāmas*. His plea is that originally the industrial population in each village catered to the requirements of the agriculturists as was the case with most villages in Pāṇini's time (VI. 2.62; V. 4. 96). With the increase in demand of their wares, they freed themselves from the tutelage of agricultural interest and withdrew to places where they had better facilities for pursuing their occupation without let or hindrance. "Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India," Vol. I, p. 212.

“Those, who with their united efforts construct on roads buildings of any kind beneficial to the whole country and who not only adorn their villages but also keep watch on them shall be shown favourable concessions by the king.”

“Rāja deśahitān setūn kurvatām pathi saṃkramāt
Grāmasobhāśca rakṣāśca tesām priyahitaṃ caret”

Compulsory participation of villagers in a co-operative undertaking involving expenditure and profits is also dwelt upon (II. 1).

In the Dharmaśāstras the king is directed to exile a man who violates the agreement of the corporate unit of village or locality (Manu V. VIII. 221; Vṛ. VIII. 9; XVII. 5). The extensive functions of municipal bodies are given by Vṛhaspati (XVII. 11-12):—

Sabhāprapā devagrha taṭāgā' rāma saṃskṛtiḥ
Tathā'nātha daridrāṇām saṃskāro yajanakriyā
Kulāyanam nirodhaśca kāryam asmābhiramṣataḥ
Yannaitalikhitaṃ samyak dharmyā sā samayakriyā.

Thus the municipalities not only undertook sacrifices and building and irrigation works but also communal charities on behalf of the indigent and relief of the afflicted in times of famine and other national calamities ('kulāyananirodbah' is explained in the Vīramitrodaya as 'kulāyana-durbhikṣādi apagama-paryantasya dhāraṇam'). Elsewhere it is directed that the funds of public associations may be properly spent on behalf of the helpless and the decrepit (XVII. 23).

This is only a matured form of the communal village life manifested in the *gaṇas* of the lawgiver's time.¹²

¹² For '*gaṇa*' used as corporate rural or municipal assembly, see R. C. Majumdar, "Corporate Life in Ancient India," 2nd ed., p. 138.

Communal Amusement

The corporate village life expressed itself in no less pronounced manner in a lighter and festal mood. It has been shown by a German scholar that the Vedic *sabhā* served as the modern club-house after the closure of its business.¹³ Later the *sāmaja* assumed a similar rôle. It had a fixed site (Mbh., XII. 69.11; Jacobi, Jaina Sutras, II. p. 117) where it organised dances, songs, music, recitations, acrobatic feats and conjuring tricks (Dn. XXXI. 10; Cv. V. 2. 6).¹⁴ The *pekham* in the Dīghanikāya, I. i. 13 is explained by Buddhaghōṣa as *naṭa-samajjā*. The Jātakas use the term as fairs in general (I. 394; III. 446, 541). Among the variety performances of the *samajjā* were combats of elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, cocks and quails; bouts at quarter-staff, boxing, wrestling, sham-fights, roll-calls, manoeuvres, revues, etc. (Dn. I. i. 13; Jāt. III. 541. Introductory story of Pācittiya 50, Vin. IV. 107). The Vinaya passages show that at these food was provided as well as amusements. These platforms Asoka used to propagate his *dhamma* by showing the people the spectacles of the *vimānas*, *hastins*, etc. (R. E. IV). The description of the *goṣṭhis* by Vātsāyana (K. S. IV) embodies a more unbridled vein of hilarity and amusement (not at the sacrifice of enterprises of public benefit for that matter) and is a contrast to the puritan denunciation of fairs and fair-fans in the Buddhist Suttas (Dn. I. i. 13; XXXI. 10; Cv. I. 13.2; V. 36).

From Tribal Autonomy to Corporation and Democracy

Sanskrit works and inscriptions profusely deal with local units, the democratic bodies that governed them and the popular

¹³ Zimmer, "Altindisches Leben," pp. 172 ff.

¹⁴ Rhys Davids suggests that these may have been "survival from exogamic communalistic dances together"—"Dialogues of the Buddha." *Naṭas* and *nartakas* figure prominently in *utsavas* and *samajas* conducive to the well-being of the State in Rāmāyaṇa II. 67.10; 100.44.

clubs and committees under the various and not strictly distinguished appellations of *śrenī*, *gaṇa*, *jāti*, *pūga*, etc.; of *sabhā samiti*, *nikāya*, *pariṣad*, *samūha*, etc.; of *goṣṭhi*, *samāja* and so on. These bodies had their laws held sacrosanct, they enjoyed autonomy in their affairs, administered judicial and municipal functions, had their funds and finances and sometimes even minted coins in their name (Basārḥ seals).¹⁵ The Śākya, Licchavis and similar oligarchical clans who held their deliberations in the *santāgāra*, exhibit in fulness the original communal brotherhood. The assemblies of heads of families as seen in the Jātakas and of elders as manifested in the Smṛtis and the Arthaśāstra reflect the earliest stages of the growth of tribal communities. The testimony of later Smṛtis (Vṛhaspati, Nārada, etc.) and of inscriptions not only South Indian demonstrates that these early nebulous institutions later evolved into well-defined structures and functional divisions and the full-fledged idea of corporation.¹⁶ The original tribal autonomy was replaced by a democracy with its constitutional conception and implication fully understood.

¹⁵ An elaborate catalogue of these institutions and their respective functions is given in Radhakumud Mukherji's 'Local Self-government in Ancient India.'

¹⁶ See E. I., I. 20, XIV. 14, XV. 7.

PHILOSOPHY OF BOSANQUET

BY

BENOY GOPAL RAY

CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK AND METHOD

(I) *Outlook*

Bernard Bosanquet writes in *Essentials of Logic*, "It is not cleverness or learning that makes the philosopher; it is a certain spirit, openness of mind, thoroughness of work and hatred of superficiality. Each of us, whatever his opportunities, can become in a true sense, if he has the real philosophic spirit, in Plato's magnificent words, 'the spectator of all time and of all existence'."¹ So was Bosanquet himself. If we care to go through the brief but finely balanced account of his life, written by his wife, we find that he was a true philosopher, a lover of truth. From his very boyhood he had in him three characteristic features—gentleness, strenuousness and discipline. Rev. W. E. Plater writes of him, "He never shirked any question, but tried to get to the very bottom of things and to set before us the arguments on both sides before enunciating his own conclusions."² As a teacher of philosophy, he exercised infinite patience and gentleness in handling the class. He writes, "I have a definite theory, which, is that it is my business to explain and not to argue, and further,

¹ *Essentials of Logic*, p. 167.

² Helen Bosanquet, *Bernard Bosanquet : Short Account of his Life*, p. 32.

to explain my own mind, rather than to make a theory at that stage. So if a man is all wrong and hot, I think of it as my duty merely to say, in the simplest way, I meant this and this, that was all. I do not feel opposition unless I forget myself.”¹ Dr. Gow writes of him, “His life was marked by a great sincerity and beauty of trust, by high courage and deep love. He always sought to see the best in others, he always made for peace. He lived habitually in the light of his own religious faith. A tireless worker, always eager to bring out the best in others, living in union with that perfect goodness which he felt to be the ultimate reality, his life radiated with quiet joy and a deep peace which passeth understanding.”²

Bosanquet loved work. He writes to his niece, “To enjoy time without wasting it, is the highest art in life perhaps.”³ He was an indefatigable worker. He devoted the whole of his life to lecturing and organising social service. Besides writing numerous addresses, essays and symposia, he finished no fewer than twenty-five volumes, into which he poured his very best. He always lived his theories and beliefs. He preached the unity of the whole. In his daily routine too, he was an ardent follower of this truth. He believed in co-operation and the ‘art of living together.’ He looked upon the whole movement of thought as essentially co-operative. Helen Bosanquet writes of him, “In all things he practised self-control; and in matters of comfort or convenience it was a deeply rooted instinct, which to the end I could never weaken, to prefer others to himself. In short, he had practised the ‘art of living together’ until he had brought it to a rare perfection.”⁴ He got the lessons of totality from

¹ *Bernard Bosanquet*, p. 52.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 151, 152.

³ *Bosanquet and his Friends* (Letters edited by Muirhead), p. 309.

⁴ *Bernard Bosanquet*, p. 84.

life and extended it to philosophy. This is why he makes so much of logic in his philosophy. Logic is the spirit of totality. It is the clue to reality, value and freedom. He writes, "By Logic we can understand, with Plato and Hegel, the supreme law or nature of experience, the impulse towards unity and coherence (the positive spirit of non-contradiction) by which every fragment yearns towards the whole to which it belongs, and every self to its completion in the Absolute, and of which the Absolute itself is at once an incarnation and satisfaction. . . . It is the strict and fundamental truth that love is the mainspring of logic." ¹

Bosanquet had always an open mind. He was a worshipper of truth. He feared none, hated none, but loved all. Wherever he went, he always shed his benign influence. "He never showed a trace of the jealousy which is sometimes attributed to men of letters and never a trace of patronage or superiority towards his juniors and intellectual inferiors." ² Quite ungrudgingly he would express his gratitude to his superiors. Thus in a letter addressed to Signor Vivante he writes, "Now I am a follower of Bradley, though I was a pupil of Green and still value his work very highly. But Bradley's system is very complete and original though founded on a very profound study of Hegel." ³

Bosanquet was a lover of nature. He liked an open out-door life. He writes to a friend, "Really the moor yesterday was quite ideal. Sea, distant clouds and purple hills, bright sun near, splendid heather and needful but not lavish birds." ⁴ He heard the pulse beat of reality in every turn of seasons and enjoyed it. Helen Bosanquet

¹ *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 340.

² *Bernard Bosanquet*, p. 62.

³ *Bosanquet and his Friends* (Letters edited by Muirhead), p. 262.

⁴ *Bernard Bosanquet*, p. 36.

writes of him, "One of the great attractions of the place (Oxshott) was the wealth of colour which it afforded to satisfy his eye, in the mingled gold and purple of gorse and heather, the deeper gold of bracken and birch trees in the autumn and the infinite variety of green in the spring foliage."¹ He saw the stamp of the Absolute on the green, heard the call of the Infinite in the song of birds and felt the presence of the Eternal in the flowering of roses. This is why he accorded a very high place to nature in his philosophy. "All finite minds focus and draw their detail from some particular sphere of external nature. . . . Every instinct of what we call the lower creation, every feeling of joy, of energy, of love, even throughout the animal world, is the outcome of some set of external conditions as focussed in life and mind, and is fitted to pass as their crown and climax into that complete experience which is the life of the whole."²

He used to say that philosophy could make its full appeal only to those who knew life. He writes, "You should remember that philosophy can tell you no new facts and can make no discoveries. All that it can tell you is the significance of what you already know. And if you know little or nothing, philosophy can tell you little or nothing."³ His wife writes of him, "To find in life new material for philosophy and to take back to life the wider views gained by philosophical insight—this I think may be said to have been his vocation."⁴ Never did he attribute a segregated and independent place to philosophy. He found philosophy in every walk of life. God is not to be found in abstruse and cold philosophical speculations. The Absolute is a common-day

¹ *Bernard Bosanquet*, pp. 88, 89

² *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 371.

³ *Essentials of Logic*, p. 166.

⁴ *Bernard Bosanquet*, p. 55.

experience. He writes, "The general formula of the Absolute, the transmutation and rearrangement of particular experiences and also of the contents of the particular finite minds, by inclusion in a completer whole of experience, is a matter of every-day verification."¹ Again his Absolute is only "the totality of a hold on reality."²

Life, for Bosanquet, is mainly an expansion. When all our faculties are expanded, we enter upon a new freedom. Things that were alien become friends and kindreds. Bosanquet always insists on the full and harmonious development of all our faculties. This is why central experiences are so important in his metaphysics. Central experiences are the great and sublime moments of life when our souls are most expanded and freed. They are not merely cognitive. "The peculiar meaning which Bosanquet attaches to (the central experience) may be most readily grasped by noting that feeling and conation as well as mere cognition are involved in it. That there is an exclusively cognitive meaning of the notion in the commonly accepted sense of 'relevancy and weight of evidence,' he of course does not deny. But he urges that the principle involved is not limited to cognition and that we are forced to apply it in the realms of feeling and will when we undertake to be critical here."³

What do the central experiences yield? Central experiences give us the metaphysical standard. The standard is positive non-contradiction. It is the principle of consistency, the spirit of the whole.⁴ Bosanquet never prefers isolation. That which fails to fit into the whole is repudiated as worthless. The aim of analysis is to

¹ *Principle*, p. 373.

² *Ibid.*, p. 382.

³ G. W. Cunningham, *The Idealistic Argument in Recent British and American Philosophy*, p. 410.

⁴ We shall have occasion to speak more on it in Chapter III.

develop a synthesis. Facts are analysed so that they might be woven into a synthetic whole. Bosanquet applies this standard to every sphere. He applies it to the sciences of morality and aesthetics. As to Ethics, he never professes to give us any code of moral action. As to the duties of citizenship he writes, "It is always true that to grasp things as they are—that is, in their spirit and movement—we must grasp them in their connexion as a whole and the duties of citizenship form no exception to the rule."¹ As to aesthetics, he is of opinion that an aesthetic experience is characterised by three properties—Permanence, Relevance and Community. "The aesthetic want is not a perishable want, which ceases in proportion as it is gratified. . . . the aesthetic experience is relevant feeling—I mean it is attached, annexed to the quality of some object. It is a common feeling. You can appeal to others to share it and its value is not diminished by being shared."² These three properties of an aesthetic experience show that there is an inherent principle of consistency in it. The principle is the metaphysical principle of non-contradiction.

(2) *Method*

What is Bosanquet's method in philosophy? The problem of method is one which has attracted the attention of the philosophers from the earliest times. Every philosopher has a method of his own. The method, if strictly followed, determines the conclusion. One can have an idea of the ultimate development of a philosopher's speculations only if he cares to understand his method. The trend of a thinker's thoughts is obvious in his method.

¹ *Science and Philosophy*, p. 292.

² *Three Lectures on Aesthetics*, pp. 4, 5.

In the history of Philosophy, it was Kant who for the first time tried to create a systematic philosophical methodology. It is true, his predecessors had methods of their own. But none attempted to build a systematic methodology. Kant initiated a new kind of philosophy which he called Critical Philosophy. "Its purpose was to serve as a propaedeutic or introduction to metaphysics, to warn the metaphysician against fallacies of method and to set him on the right road. It was in fact essentially a methodology of metaphysics. Having mastered the propaedeutic, Kant assumed that the philosopher would go back to his proper work, that of metaphysical speculation; and that now, having learnt its proper method, metaphysics, reformed and reorganised, would advance with the same sure tread as mathematics and the science of nature."¹ Thus the business of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to enable us to keep reason free from error.² Kant always tried to keep methodology and metaphysics in two watertight compartments. But he failed. "On (his own) programme, therefore, there were in future to be two distinct philosophies: a methodology, which he conceived himself to have given to the world in a definitive shape, and a substantive philosophy which, guided by this methodology, would be able to progress indefinitely. But this division, however attractive at first sight, was soon found unsatisfying. So far from being definitive, the *Critique of Pure Reason* brought the problems of methodology into the focus of men's thought, and gave rise to discussions which to some extent diverted them

¹ R. G. Collingwood, *Philosophical Method*, p. 20.

² " It (*Critique of Pure Reason*) is not a doctrine, but a criticism of pure reason, and its speculative value is entirely negative, because it does not enlarge our knowledge, but only casts light upon the nature of our reason and enables us to keep it free from error."—*The Philosophy of Kant* (Selected and Translated by J. Watson), p. 19 (New Edition).

from metaphysics and for a time made that appear a dead subject ; and even Kant himself was not clear in his own mind about the relation between the two things, for he saw that in one sense critical philosophy was a part of metaphysics though in another it was an introduction to it.”¹

Bosanquet does not pass through any systematic philosophical methodology. Like Bradley, he attacks the problem of metaphysics more directly. He says that reality is given and knowable. And forthwith he goes to know it. But he has a method of his own. It is, as he says, the method of expansion. He writes, “ I only know in philosophy one method ; and that is to expand all the relevant facts taken together, into ideas which approve themselves to thought as exhaustive and self-consistent.”² He finds the materials of philosophy in the facts of life. He expands them and tests them by applying the standard of consistency or non-contradiction. Expansion is the keynote of Bosanquet’s method. It is also the nature of the real. But it must be remembered that his Absolute or the perfect whole never expands. All expansion is within the Absolute. A thing is not so humble as it seems to be. According to Bosanquet, there is always a yearning for the Great in it. He is of opinion that we can know reality not in its humble beginnings but in the light of what it is when most fully developed. In this respect he reverentially follows the truly Platonic tradition. There is the call of the Eternal in every tiny bit of reality. Every Real tries to transcend its present state of existence and the significance of its life lies in this act of transcendence.

Wherein lies the value of expansion as a philosophical method ? The chief merit of the method lies in the fact that by it we know a fact not in its humble beginnings

¹ *Philosophical Method*, pp. 20-21.

² *Three Lectures on Aesthetics*, p. 3.

but in its developed form. Things are what they grow to be. How does a thing develop? It develops from within itself because it has the spirit of the 'whole' in it. The conception of the whole is very important in the philosophy of Bosanquet. The 'whole' contains all and everything in it has a *nisus* to it. This *nisus* or the urge for transcendence is responsible for all progress that occurs within the whole.

CHAPTER II

LOGIC AND REALITY

In the previous chapter we described the philosophical method of Bosanquet. We propose to devote this chapter to sketch the logical structure of reality as conceived by him. So far as the logical structure of the reality is concerned, Bosanquet's conception has its roots in Hegel. For Hegel, Logic and Metaphysics are one.¹ They aim at the same study. Thought, the subject of Logic is both subjective and objective. Again subjective thought and objective thought are identical. A very low view of thought may be formed if we say that thought is subjective, arbitrary and accidental. It has no connection with the thing itself. Thoughts according to Kant, although universal and necessary categories, are only our thoughts—separated from the thing. But a high opinion of thought may be formed if we say that thoughts far from being merely ours must at the same time be the real essence of things.

Thought, so regarded, is the constructive and unifying element of reality. Without it reality would not be

¹ "Logic coincides with Metaphysics, the science of things set and held in thoughts,—thoughts accredited able to express the essential reality of things." Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, 2nd Ed. p. 45 (Translation). Why does Hegel unify Logic and Metaphysics? Wallace writes, "The same principle, Thought, appeared in both : (Metaphysics and Logic) in the former as a fixed and passive result, showing no traces of spontaneity,—in the latter as an activity, with a mere power of passing from object to object, discovering and establishing connexions and relations. The two sciences were fragments, unintelligible and untenable, when taken in abstract isolation. This is the justification. . . . for Hegel's unification of Logic and Metaphysics" William Wallace, *Prolegomena to the study of Hegel's Philosophy*, p. 297,

anything for us. It is at once the form of the world, of life and of reality. In his *Logic* Bosanquet proceeds in the Hegelian way. Like Hegel, he too believes that knowing and Being are identical. Like Hegel, he too holds that thought is at the root of reality. Bosanquet begins with the question—what is the aim of *Logic*? For him, the aim of *Logic* is the construction of reality. “Psychology treats of the course of ideas and feelings; *Logic* of the mental construction of reality. How does the course of my private ideas and feelings contain in it, for me, a world of things and persons which are not merely in my mind?”¹ Bosanquet answers, “The whole world, for each of us, is our course of consciousness, in so far as this is regarded as a system of objects which we are obliged to think.”² The phrase, ‘obliged to think’ is very important. It means the objective or the real. Knowledge consists of what we are obliged to assert in thought. But my world of knowledge is separate from that of another. How is it that they correspond with each other and with reality? Bosanquet answers, “We must learn to regard our separate worlds of knowledge as something constructed by definite processes, and corresponding to each other in consequence of the common nature of these processes. We know that we begin apart. We begin in fact, though not conscious of our limits, with feelings and fancies and unorganised experiences which give us little or no common ground and power of co-operation with other people. But as the constructive process advances, the correspondence between our worlds is widened and deepened, and the greater proportion of what we are obliged to think is in harmony with what other people are obliged to think. Now of course this would not be so unless reality, the whole actual system in which we find ourselves, were self-consistent. But

¹ *Essentials*, p. 4 (1895).

² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

more than that, it would not be so unless the nature of intelligence were the same in every mind.”¹ Thus, we arrive at the position that thought is the same in all people and it is also the nature of reality.²

Hegel proceeds in a strictly logical way. He begins with the idea. The idea, for him, is the reality. It is the Absolute. The minimum, that we can speak of the idea is that the idea is Being. “Pure Being makes the beginning : because it is on one hand pure thought, and on the other immediacy itself, simple and indeterminate ; and the first beginning cannot be mediated by anything or be further determined.”³

Pure Being is absolutely indeterminate and completely empty. This emptiness is the absence of everything and hence it is nothing “This mere Being, as it is mere abstraction, is therefore the absolutely negative : which in a similarly immediate aspect is just Nothing.”⁴ Being and Nothing are identical and they pass into each other. Hence we have a third thought, *viz.*, the idea of the passage of Being and Nothing into each other. This is the category of Becoming. Being, Nothing and Becoming are the three categories of Hegelian Logic, the first Hegelian triad. This is the dialectical method which he employs in his system.

But Bosanquet does not follow the dialectical method of Hegel in its minute details. He simply realises the lesson of the Hegelian dialectic, *viz.*, the removal of contradiction and creation of harmony. He proceeds from a

¹ *Essentials*, pp. 17-18.

² In his last unfinished book—*The Nature of Mind*—Bosanquet makes much of the objectivity of thought. “Thought is the self-assertion of reality according to its characteristic laws within a complex of psychical matter which may be called a mind.” *The Nature of Mind*, p. 72. We shall deal with this point in detail in Chapter V.

³ Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 158.

⁴ *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 161.

consideration of thought. Thought, for Bosanquet, cannot remain content in contradiction. 'The essence of thought is the *nisus* towards a whole—to adjustment, to seeing things as harmonious.'¹ Bosanquet is of opinion that thought takes the form of a world and its harmonious nature is fully expressed in the 'concrete Universal.'^{*} The ultimate tendency of thought is to constitute a world or a concrete universal. What is a world? Bosanquet says, "A world or cosmos is a system of members, such that every member being *ex hypothesi* distinct, nevertheless

¹ *Principle*, (Abstracts of lecture II), p. XX.

^{*} Bosanquet disdainfully rejects the abstract universal and champions the cause of concrete universal. Let us follow his exposition of the argument. Bosanquet says that thought has a tendency to generalise. The search for general rules presupposes abstract universals. But knowledge of general rules is defective knowledge for it reaches complete emptiness. He writes, "the most general knowledge... must obviously be the least instructive, and must have its climax in complete emptiness." *Principle*, p. 34. The more general our knowledge becomes, the less is it in touch with reality. The real is given in experience but the general knowledge is a departure from experience.

In the second place he argues that an abstract universal is superficial. In an abstract universal, the identity is indifferent to the varying circumstances or differences. But in a concrete universal the identity is never indifferent to differences. On the other hand, the identity is in and through differences. The identity is dominant in the determination of circumstances. In an abstract universal, the identity will remain what it is even if the differences are other than what they are. But in a concrete universal, the identity is what it is only if the differences retain their character.

Next he argues that Judgment and inference become impossible without the concrete universal. Concrete universal is an identity in differences. Identity cannot exist without differences. The traditional use of the theory of identity is A is A 'Everything is what it is and not another thing.' Bosanquet's objection is that the formula, A is A, is not suitable for expressing any Judgment at all. To judge is to assert something. Where there is no difference between subject and predicate, nothing is asserted, and so there is no judgment. The formula, A is A, expresses mere tautology. The principle of tautology is not a principle of judgment. So Bosanquet prefers concrete identity to abstract identity. Abstract identity or A is A would make judgments impossible.

Again the concrete universal is a system and without a system, inference is impossible. Since inference is the passing from knowledge of one entity to knowledge of some other, the entities must be connected to justify such a passage. If we pass from X to Y, X and Y must be systematically connected. X must contain a clue to Y and hence they must involve a system or a concrete universal.

contributes to the unity of the whole in virtue of the peculiarities which constitute its distinctness."¹ The true logical universal of thought takes the shape of a world whose members are worlds. "The universal in the form of a world refers to diversity of content within every member, as the universal in the form of a class neglects it. Such a diversity recognised as a unity; a macrocosm constituted by microcosms, is the type of the concrete universal."²

Thus we see, thought gives us the concrete universal.* The question arises, is it a mere subjective creation? Our answer must be in the negative. The Concrete

¹ *Principle*, p. 37.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

* Bradley is of opinion that thought cannot do justice to reality. "If we take up anything considered real, no matter what it is, we find in it two aspects. There are always two things we can say about it; and if we cannot say both, we have not got reality. There is a 'what' and a 'that' an existence and a content, and the two are inseparable.... Neither of these aspects, if you isolate it, can be taken as real, or indeed in that case is itself any longer. They are distinguishable only and not divisible. And yet thought seems essentially to consist in their division. For thought is clearly, to some extent, at least, ideal. Without an idea there is no thinking, and an idea implies the separation of content from existence." *Appearance and Reality*, p. 143 (1930).

We submit, Bradley's criticism holds true in case of relational or discursive thought. But Bosanquet uses thought in a comprehensive way. His thought is not merely discursive but in part intuitive. "The characteristic embodiments of thought within finite life are knowledge (including sense-perception), love and work or activity." *Principle*, p. 61. Thought, for Bosanquet, is not alien to feeling and activity. Thought, for him, is the life of feeling. Thus he writes, "All thought, no doubt, has a mediate side: but all concrete thought has become immediate no less than mediate. In fact, what the great philosophers meant by thought, the highest possible phase of realisation, is much what most people mean (so far as they grasp the notion of it at all) when they speak of feeling. For if we admit thought to be in part intuitive, a unity asserted through diversity, there is no longer anything to prevent it from reproducing the character of feeling in the sense of immediate apprehension; an immediate apprehension which is the totality of a mediate discourse." *Principle*, p. 65. Thought, for Bosanquet, is also the essence of free activity. Thus we see, Bosanquet's thought is at once affective and volitional. Herein he differs from Bradley. Bradley's reality is sentence in its widest meaning. His sentence is a harmonious whole which includes within its sweep thought, affection and volition. Thought is only an element in Bradley's experience or sentence which he identifies with reality.

Universal, for Bosanquet, is the only objective reality. Thought, we have seen, knows reality for reality itself is thought. It is thought and thought alone which can reproduce reality without omissions. Bosanquet says, "The true office of thought, we begin to see, is to build up, to inspire with meaning, to intensify, to vivify. The object which thought in the true sense has worked upon is not a relic of decaying sense, but is a living world, analogous to a perception of the beautiful, in which every thought-determination adds fresh point and deeper bearing to every element of the whole."¹

The idea of the Concrete Universal leads us to the Absolute, the true reality. The Concrete Universal is a whole, a complete world. Wholeness or Completeness is the sign of individuality. Individuality cannot lie in imperfection or incompleteness. The Concrete Universal is completed and perfected by itself. Nor does it require any extraneous help for the maintenance of its wholeness or perfection. Thus in the truest sense, the Concrete Universal as a complete living world is the only perfect individual. Bosanquet says, this individual is the Absolute.²

In the Concrete Universal, we have got the logical structure of reality. Let us now see what picture, Logic gives us of this real. Let us reflect on Bosanquet's treatment of Judgment. "The ultimate subject of the perceptive Judgment is the real world as a whole, and it is of this that, in judging, we affirm the qualities or characteristics.... Every judgment, perceptive or universal, might without altering its meaning be introduced by such phrase as 'Reality is such that'—."³ Bosanquet's

¹ *Principle*, p. 58.

² "In the ultimate sense there can be only one individual, and that, the individual, the Absolute" *Principle*, p. 68.

³ *Logic*, Vol. I, p. 78 (1st Ed.).

treatment of judgment emphasises the Hegelian principle that Reality is one. Whatever exists falls within the one Reality. There is nothing outside this Reality. All thoughts and things belong to it.*

In the next place, judgment shows us the reality as a whole of parts or an identity in differences. It also reveals reality as a system which has unity. Bosanquet illustrates this point by means of the disjunctive judgment. The disjunctive judgment is the complete form to which the categorical and the hypothetical judgments lead up. Categorical and hypothetical judgments culminate in the disjunctive type which is a form most adequate to express the systematic nature of true experience.¹ The hypothetical has its basis in the categorical in as much as it makes an assertion. But it goes beyond the categorical by positing the relation of antecedence and consequence. Similarly a disjunction involves hypotheticals but only as alternatives. Now what is a disjunction? By true disjunction, Bosanquet means 'a judgment in which alternatives falling under a single identity are enumerated, and are known in virtue of some pervading principle to be reciprocally exclusive and to be exhaustive.'² Disjunctive judgment, for Bosanquet, does not mean the bare 'either—or' of formal logic. It means a system of mutually exclusive forms into which the whole differentiates itself.

Our result so far is this. Concrete Universal is the only true type of reality. It is the Absolute. The use of

* Bradley also speaks in the same vein. His reality or the Absolute is one. ".... The Absolute is one system.... It (is) a single and all-inclusive experience which embraces every partial diversity in concord." *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 146-47 (1908).

¹ See *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 592-593 (R. C. Lodge : *On Bosanquet and the Future of Logic*).

Joseph writes in his *Logic*, "Thus disjunctive judgment at once includes and goes beyond hypothetical in the same sort of way as hypothetical judgment includes and goes beyond Categorical." *Logic*, p. 187.

² *Logic*, Vol. I, p. 342 (1st Ed.).

the word 'concrete' is technical and requires some explanation. For Hegel, the type of universal, exemplified by the Platonic Forms, is abstract. For him, the Platonic Forms are abstractions from the particular things which they characterise. Divorced from the things to which they apply, these are nothing at all. Again shorn of the universal, a thing would be nothing at all. What then is the real? The real, for Hegel, is a combination of the two. It is the whole thing in which the universal and the particular are distinguishable but not separable aspects. Bosanquet has a strong tendency to support the Hegelian conception of reality. He conceives reality or the Absolute as a concrete universal. For him, it is a whole of wholes. Ultimate reality is to be found only in the whole which contains all other wholes as its parts. The parts are distinct but they contribute to the unity of the whole. The parts are not real by themselves. They are real in so far as they are members of whole. Similarly the whole is nothing if it be divorced from the parts. The whole is the sustaining life of the parts and the parts contribute to the unity of the whole. So far, it is quite good. But the question arises—Does Bosanquet stick to the conception of the concrete Universal? Our answer is in the negative. We shall see later on¹ that he values only the Absolute, the whole and the parts melt into thin air. His Absolute or the whole is sufficient by itself. And he degrades the parts or the members to the rank of mere elements.

¹ See Chapter VIII (*The Absolute and the Finite Individual*.)

CHAPTER III

CRITERION OF REALITY

In the previous chapter, we have described the logical structure of reality. From the structure, we pass on now to the criterion of reality. Our result so far is this. The Absolute is the reality. In the strict sense, it is the only individual. Now what is the criterion of reality? In the first chapter we have already hinted at Bosanquet's criterion. It is individuality or non-contradiction.

What is individuality? It is the formulation of the spirit of the whole. When we pass from the contradictory and unstable to the stable and satisfactory we have the principle of individuality or non-contradiction. Bosanquet tells us that the spirit of totality always carries us forward. Instinctively we move from the unstable and contradictory to the stable and satisfactory. How does the principle of non-contradiction cover within its sweep the entire mass of contradictions? When different natures claim the same place in the same system, we have logical contradiction. But in non-contradiction, the contradictions are resolved and readjusted. The character of the real where contradictions are readjusted is negativity. By negativity, he does not mean bare negation. Whenever he uses the term he adduces a peculiar meaning to it. Negativity, for him, is the wholeness or completeness where affirmations and negations find their true and proper places. As such, it is the spirit of reality. Reality in Bosanquet's philosophy is never an isolated fragment. It is a complete whole where every finite item finds its true place and lives in perfect harmony with the rest,

Bosanquet and Bradley formulate individuality as the criterion of reality and value. "It is clear," Bradley says, "that in rejecting the inconsistent as appearance, we are applying a positive knowledge of the ultimate nature of things. Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion."¹ And in the concluding pages of *Appearance and Reality* he asserts definitely, "Our criterion is individuality or the idea of complete system."²

Bosanquet makes individuality the title of his first course of Gifford Lectures. "I chose individuality," he says in his preface, "as the clue to my subject, because it seemed to be the principle which must ultimately determine the nature of the real and its constituents, of what is complete and self-contained and of what approximates, or belongs to such a reality."³ Almost in Bradley's words, he too suggests that the standard is positive non-contradiction, developed through comprehensiveness and consistency. The supreme principle of reality, for him, is wholeness or completeness. "The appeal to the whole is the same thing with the principle otherwise known as the principle of non-contradiction."⁴ Again "it is all one whether we make non-contradiction, wholeness or individuality our criterion of the ultimately real."⁵

According to Bosanquet, individuality is not opposed to uniformity. The essence of individuality is identity in difference.* The notion that uniformity excludes

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 136 (1916).

² *Ibid.*, p. 542.

³ *Principle*, p. vi.

⁴ *Principle*, p. 44.

⁵ *Principle*, p. 68.

* According to Bosanquet, identity cannot exist without differences. Thus he writes, "An identity is a universal, a meeting-point of differences and therefore always in a sense concrete.... An identity is the element of continuity that persists through differences." *Essays and Addresses*, pp. 165-66.

variability is erroneous. An identity in difference is also the essence of a true uniformity. It does not mean a meaningless repetition of resembling things, but the coherence of differences in a systematic whole. The spirit of such a whole is the true universal. Its true nature is expressed in a connected system of elements.

Thus we see, individuality is Bosanquet's criterion of reality. The next step, he takes, is to call it the criterion of value. Values play an important part in his philosophy. Hence we consider it worth while to linger on the subject of values. Value, worth and goodness are names for the same character of objects. Now-a-days, however, the terms—worth and goodness have turned obsolete in English usage. Bosanquet regards value as a category. He writes, "Goodness then is not given in experience as one kind of thing you can point out. It is a feature attaching more or less to many such; we cannot exclude the possibility that in a sense it may attach to all. It is....a category of which at least a great many objects present the character, but which is itself present as a whole in none."¹

Are values subjective or objective? Bosanquet has a strong tendency to classify them as objective though he does not efface the hold of the subjective on them. He writes, "Value, worth or goodness is a certain quality of objects *bona fide* belonging to them, but especially revealed in their manifestations within the attitude of human minds."² It will be convenient here to compare his view with that of Prof. Alexander. Alexander says that a value emerges, only when a mind and an object are connected by the relation of compresence. Value resides neither in the mind nor in the object. It is a new quality that emerges when mind is compresent with the object. Bosanquet however is not willing to assign such a

¹ *Some Suggestions in Ethics*, p. 51.

² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

subjective-objective position to values. He is inclined to believe that values are revelations of objective characters. But they are manifested within human minds.

Bosanquet says that value and existence go together. "Whatever fills a place and occupies thought and feeling must *ipso facto*, however slightly present a value."¹ There can hardly be existence without value. When we speak of virtue as having value, it is never virtue in the abstract to which the value is referred. The value is referred to the actual virtuous conduct. So when we say, health has value, it is not the concept health but health exhibited in organisms, that has value. But here we should remember a significant fact about Bosanquet's philosophy. Bosanquet, we shall see later,* lays undue emphasis on the fact that the finite individuals have got no real existence. Only the Absolute exists in the proper sense of the term. So interpreted, the Absolute alone is valuable. But Bosanquet is eager to save the 'what of an individual.' Here we face an anomaly. If the 'what' of individual is to live, it must live in the 'that.' Hence Bosanquet cannot repudiate the individuals. If value and existence go together and if we believe that the abstract concepts of beauty, goodness, virtue or health cannot float in the air, we must confess that values inhere in objects. If value is conserved, the individual too is conserved for it is only in the latter that the former lives, moves and has its being. But for Bosanquet, only the values survive in the Absolute. What is the truth about the relation of actuality and value? Let us take the values of art. It will be convenient here to express the views of Taylor. He expresses the relation in an admirable passage—"What we really regard as so very good is beauty

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

* See Chapter XI. Also Chapter VIII (for detailed discussion).

as constituting the characteristic form of the beautiful thing, beauty as existing in the poem, or symphony or portrait, not beauty as a concept, detached from the individual things of beauty in which it is embodied.”¹ Truth, beauty and goodness to which we always ascribe values are in all cases concentered.

Values are always concrete. But can we assign a sure criterion to value? It is often argued, that value is a matter of feeling. As such it cannot have any standard. Bosanquet is of opinion that there can be no value apart from feeling. But having feeling we can surely test it. “In truth the education of feeling is the most important of all education—teaching people to like and dislike rightly—as the Greeks knew; and this means that there is a standard.”²

Value involves satisfaction. That which has the property of satisfactoriness can satisfy human want. It alone has worth or value. Again satisfaction depends on the logical stability of the whole. The mind obtains more satisfaction in an experience which is more real. Bosanquet adheres to Plato’s conclusion that ‘objects of our likings possess as much of satisfactoriness—which we identify with value—as they possess of reality and trueness.’ Thus, satisfactoriness involves truth and reality. And this is a logical standard and a standard involving the whole.* While establishing individuality as the criterion of value, Bosanquet fights against the use of teleology in the ordinary sense of the term. He criticises it as a criterion of value. If by teleology we mean direction by a Supreme Mind outside the universe, we are sure, such a teleology cannot ‘explain’ the universe or its value. The universe as a whole is self-directing. In other words, individuality or

¹ *The Faith of a Moralist*, p. 43 (Series I).

² *Principle*, (Abstracts of Lectures), Lecture VIII.

* *Principle*, p. 317.

completeness is the only criterion of value. Bosanquet does not wholly repudiate teleology. He is willing to accept it if it be purged of its ordinary meaning. He says, "If it (teleology) is to retain a meaning, it must abandon the whole analogy of finite contrivance and selection and must fall back on the characteristics of value which, apart from sequence in time, and from selected purpose, attach to the nature of totality which is perfection. In this transition, the principle of purposiveness, of a nature imperative on every element of a whole, expands into the principle of individuality or positive non-contradiction."¹ This is ideal teleology.

Thus we have arrived at the principle of individuality, the criterion of reality and value. But difficulties arise when Bosanquet makes an application of it. Every finite value is tested by the criterion of the whole. But can any value-judgment be passed on the whole? Is the universe good or bad? Bosanquet says that it is perfection and the standard of all goodness and value. He is not willing to value it though he values all else by it. Surely the whole has value. But he does not show us any way how to evaluate the whole. Bosanquet might have avoided this difficulty if he had said—The value of the finite is judged by the value of the whole and the latter is judged by means of itself alone. Just as light dispels darkness and expresses itself, so individuality is its own criterion as well as that of finite values. The whole does not require any criterion other than itself. The complete individuality cannot have a standard that is outside of itself, for in that case its individuality would be gone. Indeed the whole has nothing outside of itself.

¹ *Principle*, pp. 126-27.

We shall refer to teleology in connexion with "time." See Chapter IX (*The Absolute and Change*).

Next arises the difficulty about the question of satisfaction. With great enthusiasm and approval Bosanquet introduces the argument of Plato by which he leads up to the conception of a perfection of positive pleasure. The principle of the argument is this—"that positive pleasure and all satisfaction, as distinct from an intensity of feeling which there is reason to suspect of being illusory, depends on the character of logical stability of the whole inherent in the objects of desire, and that what in this sense is more real, that is, more at one with itself and the whole is also the experience in which the mind obtains the more durable and coherent satisfaction, and more completely realises itself. This consideration prescribes the nature of the ultimate good or end, which is the supreme standard of value...."¹ J. E. McTaggart raises a query. "One step in this argument then is that satisfaction is value and that nothing else is value. Now if the supporters of this position be confronted with Kant who declares that other things have value besides satisfaction or with Bentham who maintains that nothing but pleasure has value, what would they do? They would not agree with them. But could they argue with them?"² Here we like to suggest that some argumentation is possible. Value cannot be gross pleasure for this is variable. It is subject to change and it can be modified by environments. A criterion which is always variable is not a true criterion. Kant declares that there are other things which have value besides satisfaction. But such an assertion can only be made when the term satisfaction is taken in a narrow sense. If by satisfaction we mean something which is based on the very nature of reality which is individuality, surely satisfaction covers the entire range of values.

¹ *Principle*, pp. 298-99.

² See Critical Notices, *Mind* (N. S., 1912), p. 425.

But here a fresh difficulty arises. Value is satisfaction. A thing is valuable for me when I find satisfaction in it. But is satisfaction dependent on my feeling? Bosanquet would answer the question in the negative. If it were dependent on my feeling, then my value-judgment would differ from that of another. Thus we see, satisfaction is something which is universal. It is based on the "amount of reality and trueness" of the thing. In other words, Bosanquet places satisfaction in an abstract plane which has no concern with the feeling tone of the individual. But the question crops up. Can there be any value without feeling? We answer it in the negative. Bosanquet himself says that there can be no value apart from feeling. But whenever he comes to enunciate a suitable standard of value, he seems to be forgetful of this particular truth. His 'satisfaction' becomes highly abstract and intellectualistic in character.

Lastly, we venture to make one more remark on Bosanquet's criterion. The chief merit of Bosanquet lies in his formulation of individuality as the criterion of reality and value. Individuality is indeed the surest criterion. We accept it as a necessity of reason. Life and Science vindicate this principle. In its formulation he is faultless. But in its application, he is perhaps forgetful of the real character of the formula. Bradley, we have seen, takes up individuality as the criterion of value and reality. But he starts from "the visionary and impracticable standpoint of an absolute experience." It seems, he defines the Absolute on the basis of an empty principle of individuality and from that definition condemns the phenomenal world as "irrational appearance." The result of such a procedure is harmful to his whole philosophy. In his philosophy, no attempt is made to determine the place of each aspect of reality in an articulated system. The Hegelian method teaches us one great lesson. It

teaches us how to pass step by step from the lowest category to the highest and to show that the various phases of reality form a graded system. It seems, Bradley is fully aware of the advantages of such a method. He styles his Absolute as an individual and a System.¹ Again he says that a complete philosophy would be "a systematic account of all the regions of appearance, for it is only the completed system which in metaphysics is the genuine proof of the principle."² "From the space and atoms of matter to the highest life of the self-conscious self, we can perceive a scale of individuality and self-containedness." But it is a matter of great regret that Bradley does not act up to this conviction.

We have seen, Bosanquet starts with the Hegelian 'concrete universal.' From this we may legitimately hope that he will determine the place of each aspect in the scheme of the real. He will measure every sphere of experience by his criterion and give it a rank according to its merits and defects. We know, the concrete universal is a whole of wholes. Ultimate and complete reality is to be found in the whole which contains all other wholes as its parts. The parts are not completely real. There are degrees of truth and reality. According to him, individuality is most completely present in the Absolute. All other things possess it in a lesser degree. Again, "there are real differences in things corresponding to the degree in which they are permitted or permit themselves to be dominated by the form or idea of the whole."³

But the question again arises. Does Bosanquet cling to this view? Our answer again is in the negative. Whenever he discusses the relation of the Absolute to finite individuals, he forgets the true spirit of the formula of

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 144 (1916).

² *Ibid.*, p. 455 (1916).

³ See Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*, p. 417.

individuality. It seems, he reverts to the position of Bradley. Like Bradley, he too defines the Absolute on an empty principle of individuality and condemns the world of phenomena as inconsistent appearance.. The finite individuals are reduced to passing phenomena. They become mere elements and require transformation.*

* We shall have occasion to speak more on it in Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER IV

NATURE *

So far we have found that the reality, for Bosanquet, is the Absolute. In this chapter we pass from the Absolute to nature. How do we pass from the Absolute to nature? This question will engage our attention later. Let us first discuss whether nature can exist without mind. Is it something that falls outside all minds? Unfortunately Bosanquet's entire treatment of nature is full of irreconcilable remarks. His theory of nature involves two main strands, but they cannot be integrated. In his delineation of nature, Bosanquet repudiates both naturalism and pan-psychism. We shall see later on that Bosanquet's real intention is not to vindicate the claims of naturalism. But he cannot altogether avoid the doctrine of pan-psychism.

Let us dwell on Bosanquet's first set of assertions. Bosanquet is of opinion that it is nature that moulds minds and he devotes two lectures in the second Gifford Volume to this theme. He speaks of nature as purely external. There is an externality "at first purely external"—and "unmodified and pristine externality."¹ In another place he writes, "The world comes first; it works towards finding a centre, and in this working the types of our thinking and experience arise."² Somewhat later he remarks, "Finite consciousness and the finite self come late, on the top of immense stores of unconscious mechanism

* In the writings of Bosanquet, nature and externality are used in the same sense. Body is a part of externality.

¹ *Value and Destiny*, pp. 83, 84.

² *Principle*, p. 219.

and adaptation, which are to all appearance its precondition."¹ We cite more passages below to add to the force of those just quoted.² From these quotations it is clear that nature or externality can exist in its own right. Mind arises out of nature and is a late comer. Mind is nature when the latter reaches a certain level of organisation.

But there is another vein of assertion. Bosanquet believes that 'nature is plastic and responsive to mind.'³ In another place he writes, "The content of mind is the content of nature because nature is the instrument or element of the Absolute by which the mind's own 'nature' is communicated to it. On the other hand, the content of nature is the content of mind, because it is only in the sphere of mind that nature reveals, to begin with, anything at all, and *a fortiori*, that she reveals the possibilities of life and spirituality that are shut up within her."⁴ Again in another place he writes, "Nature thus exists only through finite mind. But finite minds, again exist only through nature."⁵ Here we see Bosanquet is not willing to affirm that nature can exist in its own right. Nature is as much dependent on mind as the latter is on the former. In other words, he takes recourse to such a view as makes nature and minds inter-dependent.

¹ *Principle*, p. 219.

² "The self, itself, draws its material from nature and even as subject, . . . is making use of that material to give itself the feeling of self-hood"—*Principle*, p. 359. "Mind is the meaning of externality, which under certain conditions concentrates in a new focus of meaning, which is a new finite mind." *Principle*, p. 220.

The lecture on 'Bodily Basis of Mind' (Gifford, Volume I) contains many such passages. This lecture moved Dr. McTaggart to observe, "Almost every word that Dr. Bosanquet has written about the relation of mind and matter might have been written by a complete materialist."

³ *Principle*, p. 366.

⁴ *Principle*, p. 367.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

Quite in the same spirit, he repudiates pan-psychism. He is of opinion that if pan-psychism be adopted, "all externality is dissolved away."¹ He says, "It (pan-psychism) transforms the complementariness of mind and nature, on which as it would seem, their inseparability depends, by an analysis of one into the other such as wholly to destroy the speciality of function for which the one is needed by the other. Why insist on reducing to a homogeneous type the contributions of all elements to the whole? What becomes of the material incidents of life—of our food, our clothes, our country, our own bodies? Is it not obvious that our relation to these things is essential to finite being, and that if they are in addition subjective psychical centres their subjective psychical quality is one which so far as realised would destroy their function and character for us?"² Thus he denounces pan-psychism but we shall see later on that he cannot altogether avoid the theory.

Bosanquet is of opinion that nature conditions mind.³ In what sense does he propose that nature is the condition of mind? According to Bosanquet, it is nature that moulds mind. Here the meaning is clear. Conditioning may be taken in the sense of moulding. What is moulded is finite minds and it is nature which makes them what they are. "We are now compelled to accept as fact," he says, "a state of the globe prior to the existence of human race, or even of organic life...."⁴ This

¹ *Principle*, p. 363.

² *Ibid.*, p. 363.

³ The external world is "the condition and the complement of spiritual being." *Principle*, p. 319.

⁴ *Logic*, Vol. II (2nd Ed.), p. 218.

Bradley is not as sure as Bosanquet in speaking of a wholly pre-organic world.

"Outside of this boundary (range of our intellects)," he writes, "there is no Nature. We may employ the idea of a pre-organic time, or of a physical world from which all sentience has disappeared. But, with the knowledge that we possess,

pre-organic world sets the conditions of mind. But in another place Bosanquet observes, "Nature exists through finite mind." Nature is nature only through finite mind. How can we reconcile these two opposed assertions? Something by way of reconciliation may conveniently be suggested here. It is true, nature or externality is the first thing to appear. From nature grew mind. So far as the origin is concerned, externality is prior to mind. We can think of a time when there was no mind. Only nature remained. In course of time, a certain type of this externality grew into mind. It then faces nature as its environment. In this connexion it should be remembered that the environment does not remain foreign to its centre, *viz.*, the mind. Mind is soaked in the environment. Prior to the evolution of mind, nature existed in its own independence. But after its evolution, nature is inseparably connected with the mind. An intimate relation ensues between them. Before the birth of mind, nature is the conditioner of mind but after its birth, it is its complement. But we shall at once rule out the suggestion for, in the next paragraph, we shall see that Bosanquet's nature can never exist without mind.

Here arises a fresh point concerning the conditioning of minds. Let us consider the remark of Bosanquet, "If you ask what in nature is not mind, you can only answer, the fragmentary or disconnected *qua* fragmentary or disconnected."¹ How can a fragmentary something mould anything? How can a disconnected nature mould mind which, for Bosanquet is a whole? Bosanquet may

we cannot, even in a relative sense, take this result as universal. It could hold only with respect to those organisms which we know, and, if carried further, it obviously, becomes invalid. And again such a truth, where it is true, can be merely phenomenal.... A nature without sentience is, in short, a mere construction for science and it possesses a very partial reality." *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 244-45 (1930).

¹ *Principle*, p. 367.

give us this reply "He would very likely reply (as he insists in the 2nd Gifford Volume) that the nature which moulds our minds is a 'second nature' already shot through with volitions."¹ "Every jot and tittle of this world is a volitional transformation of a relatively natural fact."² This perhaps reveals the real intention of Bosanquet. Nature that moulds minds is not simply the fragmentary and disconnected. It is volitionally transformed, connected and unified nature. In other words, it is not mere nature but nature-mind that moulds minds.

So, we come to grasp the real thesis of Bosanquet. Nature can never exist without mind. Nature is always hyphenated with mind. He is no less emphatic than Bradley in insisting that nature by itself is a mere abstraction.³ When Bosanquet admits that nature which moulds minds is nature already shot through with volition, is he not driven to accept the truth of pan-psychism, which he violently repudiates? We submit, Bosanquet cannot altogether avoid the tinge of pan-psychism in his treatment of nature.

Next the question arises. Why does Bosanquet speak of an "unmodified and pristine externality?" What can we say about the first set of assertions which we quoted above? Some critics suggest that Bosanquet writes such passages, when he is in a realist mood. But when his realist mood is in abeyance, he insists on the view that nature without mind is nothing. We believe, it is going

¹ See *Mind*, Vol. XLIII, (1934), p. 326.

² *Value and Destiny*, p. 113.

³ In the chapter on Nature, (*Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXII). Bradley discusses the independent status of nature. For him, nature cannot exist in its own right. He emphatically affirms that nature by itself has no reality. It must be related to finite mind. What lies beyond finite centres is, properly speaking, not nature at all. Throughout the chapter, Bradley calls nature an appearance. "It exists only as a form of appearance, within the Absolute. In its isolation from that whole of feeling and experience it is an untrue abstraction...."

Ibid., p. 259 (1930).

too far. It is very difficult to account for Bosanquet's vacillating treatment of nature. However one thing about Bosanquet's philosophy is certain. He never likes to end in naturalism and materialism. Nor does he end in realism. We may make at least one remark in his favour. We have seen, there are two distinct sets of assertions in his philosophy of nature. The first set affirms that nature can exist apart from mind. It can exist in its own right. The second set affirms that nature and mind are inter-dependent. The second set reveals his real view while the first one is used only by way of discussion.

Before we close the chapter, we must discuss the question—How do we pass from the Absolute to nature? This is a knotty problem which Bosanquet cannot solve. Bosanquet does not explicitly account for this transition. Hegel tried to solve the problem but he too hesitated and fumbled over the transition from idea to nature.¹ For Hegel, nature is the opposite of the idea. It is the idea gone out of itself into otherness. Hence nature begins with that which is most mindless or irrational. In the succeeding stages of nature, mind or reason reawakens. Thus we see, in his *Logic*, Hegel begins with the idea. Here the idea is in and for itself. The *Philosophy of Nature* is the science of the idea in its otherness. The *Philosophy of Mind* is the science of the idea come back to itself, out of that otherness.² Can we interpret Bosanquet in a Hegelian light? Like Hegel, Bosanquet too cannot explain the transition from the Absolute to

¹ As to the actual transition from idea to nature, Hegel says, "Since the idea posits itself as the absolute unity of the pure notion and its reality, and consequently assumes the form of immediate being, it is, as the totality of this form, nature." W. T. Harris, *Hegel's Logic*, p. 398 (1895). Translation.

The thought of the idea contains and involves the thought of immediacy. The thought of immediacy is the thought of givenness, or externality. And this thought of givenness is the thought of nature. But critics are of opinion that this deduction is invalid or at least insufficient.

² Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, 2nd Ed., pp. 28-29.

nature. We have already remarked¹ that Bosanquet does not follow the dialectic of Hegel in its minute details. But he always accepts the truth of the Hegelian dialectic. It cannot be said that Bosanquet treats nature as the Absolute in its otherness. All that can be said about Bosanquet's nature is this : Nature is not an independent reality. Apart from the context of the whole, it is nothing. Minds arise from nature. But we can never think of nature apart from mind. Again minds that arise from nature transform nature. Nature is complete in our minds, each of which draws its content from some particular range of nature. All details of nature are elicited into mental foci and pass through them into the complete experience which we call the perfect whole or the Absolute.²

¹ Chapter II.

² Bosanquet's Absolute is..... "a perfect union of mind and nature, absorbing the world of nature by and through the world of selves,"—See *Principle* p 382.

CHAPTER V

MIND ¹

From the previous chapter we learn that mind arises from nature. But it must be remembered that nature which gives birth to mind is not mere nature but nature-mind. Nature, apart from mind, is nothing.

What is mind? At the very outset it is worth while making a remark on the last work of Bosanquet. He intended to write a comprehensive work on *Thought Consciousness and Universe*. It was his intention to state in the book the full nature of mind and thought. But unfortunately death snatched him away. He could not live to finish the already-begun book. However Helen Bosanquet, the wife of our philosopher, has published the "Three chapters on the nature of mind." It will be our business here to develop the hints and indications that Bosanquet has left to us in these three chapters. Bosanquet discusses what a mind is for the biographer. In the first instance, the biographer thinks of mind as a consciousness. It has contents. Bosanquet says that the biographer or the novelist is not *prima facie* wrong when he argues that mind is consciousness and that it has ample contents. The biographer considers his hero as a consciousness. This point of view might develop ill or well. Bosanquet writes, "It would develop ill if it led us to insist on consciousness as the receptacle or container; in which all the contents of a mind can be surveyed like the furniture of a room or the picture which is a panorama. It would nevertheless, in my judgment, develop well if it caused us to consider the mind, though far from wholly present

¹ Bosanquet uses Mind, Soul and Self in the same sense.

at any moment in or to explicit consciousness, yet as growing by what it feeds on, and having its unity rather in the interrelation and interdependence of its constituents than in any conceivably separable unifying principle brought in from 'out of doors'." ¹ For the biographer the man is what he can find in him. He finds in the man a unity. He ascribes this unity not to subject or object "but simply to what it is, a something analogous to a pleasurable or painful being." ² In the next place the mind is always studied by the biographer in relation to the external world and bodily habits. The external world serves as a sort of background. The hero of the novelist lives, moves and has his being against this background. As he proceeds, the novelist deals with the body and its habits. He does not raise any question as to whether mind is founded on the body. But he knows that it is through the body as instrument that he has to bring to light the facts of mind. Bosanquet gathers from the biographer or the novelist the truth that mind is at least consciousness. And it is a principle of unity.

How is mind related to its objects? Bosanquet does not favour the time-honoured distinction between a content and an object. In the Brentano-Meinong account of mind, the content of thought is separated from the object of thought. Bosanquet is unwilling to accept this separation. He affirms, "In a common sense perception we are not aware of anything like this separation between content and object. The object is clothed in its content and what we say of it, we say of the single thing before us, not of a something remote which is like a something else at home which we have existentially in our minds." ³ According

¹ *Three Chapters on the Nature of Mind*, p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

In the 3rd chapter of the book *Nature of Mind* Bosanquet criticises Russell's conception of mind and affirms his view that "thought is the control of the mental

to him, in an act of sensation the mind and its object do not stand apart from each other. Mind is not like a thing that faces other things. Mind and its objects are continuous. In this respect Bosanquet's view is more logical than that of a neo-realist. A neo-realist (Alexander) draws a sharp line between mind and its objects. In reality, perhaps, no such line can be drawn. When we are aware of an object, we are aware of it as a unity. This unity involves the life of mind. Bosanquet explains it by a homely example. "What I see when I look at a blue thing has unity and life. Its parts, that is, though varied, confirm, support and determine one another by explicit 'compresence.' It pulsates with feeling, a common tone, which involves the presence of a whole all at once, reinforcing and modifying every part by the simultaneous effects of all. What does a unity of this kind consist in? Surely that of consciousness and no other. Blue, then, while it retains the characters of blue, must have in it the life of mind...." ¹

What is the typical and fundamental act of mind? It is thought. But what is thought? "If thought is the control of the mind by the object, and this control is the act *par excellence* of the mind, then the act *par excellence* of the mind is not its own. That is to say, thought rather governs consciousness than is an act of consciousness." ² Such an account of thought seems to be paradoxical but this is what Bosanquet wants to say. He writes, "Thought is the self-assertion of reality according

process by the real object." He sympathises with Russell when he holds that thought is closely connected with "habit and memory as a development of mnemonic causation." But Bosanquet wants Russell to say more. Thus he writes, "I want him to recognise that in and through the working of mnemonic causation thought is the control of mental process by the real object."—*Nature of Mind*, p. 156.

¹ *The Distinction between Mind and its Objects*, pp. 32, 33 (Adamson Lecture).

² *Three Chapters on the Nature of Mind*, p. 59.

to its characteristic laws within a complex of psychical matter which may be called a mind.”¹

Here arises a query of considerable importance. Hitherto we have found that thought is the central function of mind. It is also at the bottom of reality.² Thought is both subjective and objective. The passages which we have quoted above tend to make much of the objectivity of thought. We have seen, Bosanquet goes so far as to say that thought is the control of the mind by the real object. Why does Bosanquet indulge in such assertions as quoted above? The reason is not far to seek. He never likes to treat thought as a mere weapon or instrument of mind by means of which alien objects are known. Always he abhors that idea. He considers the knowledge-situation in which the mind and its object enter as a system and such a system is thought. But it should be borne in mind that thought is not merely the character of the system but of the members which constitute the system. Bosanquet warns us not to lose sight of this truth. This is why he makes so much of the objectivity of thought.

Objectivity of thought reveals an interesting point. According to Bosanquet, mind or self is always a mediated reality. The reality of mind is conditioned by the world with its objects. Mind or self, for our philosopher, is always relational, mediated and objectifiable. This view of Bosanquet is sharply opposed to that of the Advaita thinkers of India. The Advaita thinkers consider self³ as an ultimate, non-relational consciousness which is necessarily unobjectifiable and immediate.

So far we have described the general nature of mind and its relation to objects. Now let us turn to a new feature of mind. We know, nature moulds minds, but

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

² See Chapter II.

³ Advaita thinkers draw a line of demarcation between Self and Mind. But Bosanquet uses them in the same sense.

mind also moulds nature. 'Being moulded' and 'moulding'—these two acts are simultaneous. On the one hand, mind is being moulded by nature and on the other, it is moulding nature.¹ How can mind mould its environment? Bosanquet explains it by means of the secret or miracle of will. Mind can always transform things for the better. "The secret lies in the fact that mind has always more in it than is before it. Or, in other words, the universe is all connected. So for every given situation there is a larger and more effective point of view than that given, and because the spirit of the whole, in the shape of some special want or question, is always in the mind, it can always, in principle, find clues to new possibilities in every given situation."² Thus we see, mind can mould nature because it has in it the spirit of the whole. The change which we make in the world is "the reshaping of our world by itself under the influence of the *nisus* of mind to the whole." Institutions arise under the influence of this *nisus* of mind. Bosanquet is of opinion that institutions come out of natural facts. Thinking will elicits them. Society and civilization arise out of primary externality for the thinking will is active in it. What results, then, do we get when mind as a will moulds circumstance? The results are the various human ways of living embodied in institutions. Here it may be conveniently remarked that this conception of Bosanquet has its roots in Hegel's view of objective mind.³

¹ "Being moulded, on the one hand, and moulding circumstance on the other—coming alive as a world, but as a world reshaping itself and transcending itself through striving towards the unity which is completeness—are the double aspect of the Soul or Self. . . ." *Value*, pp. 129-30.

² *Value*, p. xxiv.

³ In the *Philosophy of Mind*, Hegel at first discusses the nature of subjective mind and then passes on to the objective mind. "An intelligent will, or a practical reason, (is) the last word of the psychological development. But a reason which is practical, or a volition which is intelligent, is realised by action which takes regular shapes, and by practice which transforms the world. The theory of objective mind delineates the new form which nature assumes under the sway of intelligence

How does Bosanquet discuss the problem of the relation between mind and body? Like all other philosophers, Bosanquet too tackles this vexed problem. He rejects interaction for it is not possible to separate mind and body from each other. For him, mind is neither separate from the body nor, as the materialist holds, a mere by-product of matter. Mind or self is the centre or awakening of a determinate world. We should not think of mind as a spiritual substance operating *ab extra* upon the material body. According to Bosanquet, mind is only the interpretation or appreciation of the body. He accepts "the conscious process as the essence of a certain kind of physical process, and as covered by its physical cost in the body's balance-sheet."¹

But the question arises, is it an explanation or a statement of facts? We might call mind an interpretation or appreciation of the body. Still the persistent question remains—How are the physical series and the psychical series connected with each other? How is the interpretation connected with the physical process? Again, what do we mean by the expression, interpretation of the body? Bosanquet is not willing to call the inter-

and will. That intellectual world realises itself by transforming the physical into a social and political world, the given natural conditions of existence into a freely-instituted system of life, the primitive struggle of kinds for subsistence into the ordinances of the social state. Given man as a being possessed of will and intelligence, this inward faculty, whatever be its degree, will try to impress itself on nature and to reproduce itself in a legal, a moral and social world." Wallace, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, p. xxviii.

¹ *Principle*, p. 197.

As to the relation between mind and body, Bosanquet writes, "The view of this relation which we should favour would be more akin to 'parallelism' than to 'interaction' because we should wish to think of mind rather as a perfection and co-operation of the adaptations and acquisitions stored in the body than as a separate thing, independent of these, and acting upon the body from the outside without being regulated by them." *Principle*, p. xxv. But it should be borne in mind that Bosanquet does not adopt the doctrine of parallelism. The phrase "akin to parallelism" appears in the above passage, but only by comparison with interaction. See *Value*, p. 2 (note).

pretation an effect of the body. Is interpretation an extraneous affair? Bosanquet answers this question in the negative. It is very difficult to form an exact idea of what he means by the expression—interpretation of body. He is never explicit on the point. It seems, all that Bosanquet speaks of the relation between mind and body is not by way of an explanation but by way of a statement of facts. Like Bradley he too thinks the problem to be insoluble. In one place he writes, "I do not for a moment pretend that I can overcome the difficulties, which have been pronounced insurmountable of uniting the treatment of soul and body in a single explanatory theory."¹ Bradley gives up all hopes of explaining the vexed problem. "It is not possible," says he, "to explain the connexion between soul and body, for soul and body are not realities. Each is a series, artificially abstracted from the whole, and each.... is self-contradictory. We cannot in the end understand how either comes to exist, and we know that both, if understood, would, as such, have been transmuted. To comprehend them, while each is fixed in its own untrue character, is utterly impossible. But if so, their way of connexion must remain unintelligible."²

There is one more vexed but serious problem about mind. Can we call the Absolute and the finite individuals minds? Bosanquet is of opinion that the finite individual is a mind.³ "What we can say affirmatively is that the individual, as we know him, is mind, and a mind."⁴ Bosanquet thinks that the characteristic of mind is to possess the 'logic and spirit of the whole.' Hence mind is also styled a whole. Bosanquet sums up his views on

¹ *Principle*, p. 187.

² *Appearance and Reality*, p. 297 (1930).

³ It should be remembered that, for Bosanquet, there is only one individual and that is the Absolute. Finite beings are individuals in a secondary sense. See *Principle*, pp. 68-69. Also see Reference, Chapter II, Logic and Reality (note).

⁴ *Principle*, p. 286.

the nature of the finite individual thus : " What we call the individual then is not a fixed essence, but a living world of content, representing a certain range of externality, which in it strives after unity and true individuality or completeness because it has in it the spirit of non-contradiction, the form of the whole." ¹ Thus we see, the finite mind has in it the ' logic and spirit of the whole.' But it possesses the form of the whole in a limited degree. Only the Absolute possesses the form of the whole in a perfect manner. It alone exhibits the spirit of non-contradiction most fully. In this sense the Absolute alone can be taken as the best whole and the most perfect mind. But it must be remembered that Bosanquet's Absolute is not another mind. It is not a mind apart from finite minds. Finite minds are constituents of its energy. ² Thus we see, the Absolute and the finite individuals can be called minds. It is only in the sense indicated above that we can best understand the following favourite assertion of Bosanquet. He says, " I do not doubt that anything which can ultimately be, must be of the nature of mind or experience, and, therefore, that reality must ultimately be conceived after this manner." ³ All that we mean by the assertion is that reality is of the nature of mind. To be of the nature of mind is to possess the ' logic and spirit of the whole.'

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

² But in Chapter VIII we shall find that the finite minds have melted into thin air. They have been transmuted and rearranged in the Absolute,

³ *Principle*, p. 135.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

From the previous chapter we learn that the finite individual may be called a mind. In this chapter we propose to discuss the adventure and stability of finite selfhood. Bosanquet agrees with Green¹ in insisting on the finite-infinite nature of the individual. According to him, the finite individual tries to transcend itself. It tries to fulfil itself because the spirit of the whole is operative in it. In this act of self-transcendence, it faces the whirlwind of hazards and troubles.

The immediate appearance of things suggests that the finite selves are at arm's length with one another. It seems, they live in a world of claims and counter-claims. The finite individuals regard themselves as independent beings although they are connected by relations of right and duty. "Life so conceived," Bosanquet says, "is full of hazard and hardship; of hazard, because these relations of right and duty do not express our real unity with God, man, and nature, and so have a character of chance; of hardship, because, being accidental, they are constantly breaking down, and we find ourselves always failing in our 'duty' and not getting our rights."² But is it the last word of life? Bosanquet answers the question in the negative. We consider life as hazardous

¹ There is a divine principle at work in man. The infinite in him impels him to realise his potential nature. He has the impulse "to make himself what he has the possibility of becoming, but actually is not, and hence not merely, like the plant or animal, undergoes a process of development, but seeks to, and does, develop himself." Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 182 (2nd Edition).

² *Value and Destiny*, p. xxv.

because we have not yet realised that we are also infinite. We regard the world in which we live as one of claims and counter-claims, because we have not yet found out the deeper unity which binds us together. Bosanquet says, we really belong not to a world of claims and counter-claims but to "the great world of spiritual membership." The security and stability of finite selfhood lies in religious consciousness where the finite individual gives up its individualistic claims and surrenders itself to the whole.

Similarly, pleasure and pain come under the head of hazards and hardships. "Pleasure is certainly a hazard. It may come from anything, good or bad, and we cannot tell what in a given context it indicates. Pain is both a hazard and a hardship. Not only may it come from anything and indicate anything, but it seems to be in itself a cruelty exercised by the universe upon us."¹ Pleasures and pains of the finite are the outcome of its double nature. Man experiences both pleasure and pain because he is a finite-infinite being and, as such, always tries to transcend his limited nature. When our effort towards completeness is successful, the result is pleasure. Again when it is unsuccessful, we have pain. Thus we see, pain and pleasure are the necessary accompaniments of the same forward movement of life.

From the above it is clear that the finite individual has to face hazards and hardships. It is because man as a finite-infinite being has the greatest impulse to transcend his limited nature that he experiences the tribulations, pleasures and pains of life. But wherein lies the security? We have already remarked that the security of finite selfhood lies in religious consciousness.

Now, what is religious consciousness? It amounts to the recognition of its own nature by a finite-infinite creature. Hegel declares, "Religion is the knowledge

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

possessed by the finite mind of its nature as absolute mind." Bosanquet mingles his tune with that of Hegel when he says "Religion is just the weld of the finite and the infinite."¹ Religious consciousness lifts us above our finitude and connects us with the supreme spirit. "It is the surrender or completion of finite selfhood in the world of spiritual membership."² Man has the true religious attitude whenever he makes his "finite self seem as nothing and some reality to which it attaches itself seem as all."³

What does religion yield? It does not yield escape from effort, release from pain or respite from evil. These are involved in the very structure of finitude and it cannot be expected that they will vanish. Religion affords emancipation but it is emancipation *through* these experiences and not *from* them. Bosanquet says, "In the broadest sense wherever man is devout—wherever he places his value in something beyond his private self, and that something taken to be real—there he has set his foot on ground which so far emancipates him from the hazards and hardships, the discipline of finiteness; or rather emancipates him not so much from these incidents as actually through them."⁴

Religious consciousness gives us security. It is by way of religion that man attains to a basic confidence in life and comes to "be at home" in the universe. Security comes only through "giving ourselves to something which we cannot help holding supreme." Thus to give one's self is the attitude of faith. Hence the whole meaning of religion might be summed up in the well-known expression, justification by faith. The universal basis and structure of religion appear wherever man is devoted

¹ *What Religion Is*, p. 62.

² *Value*, p. 226.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

to a cause "where his personal fate seems to him as nothing in comparison of the happiness or triumph of the cause."¹ The question may here arise: Wilt thou be made whole? Bosanquet replies, yes. How? Bosanquet says, we are made whole through joining a whole. A finite being exhibits discordant ideas and attitudes, conflicting systems of thought and habit. The soul which constitutes the finite being is the principle of rationality. This generates the effort, of readjustment, reconciliation and incorporation into a more comprehensive and non-contradictory whole. The world of claims and counter-claims with its typical manifestations is incapable of independently maintaining itself. It can exist only within the deeper and more comprehensive order of a spiritual whole.

Is religious consciousness to be had through philosophy? Philosophy depends on the religious consciousness but the latter does not depend on the former. Religion being a full experience is essential to philosophy.² Philosophy as a theoretical interpretation of experience must depend on religious consciousness. But religious consciousness stands in its own right. Philosophy, however, serves a useful purpose. In considering religious consciousness "much assistance may be given by philosophy in separating the essential from the unessential."³ Bosanquet says that the religious consciousness stands in its own right and needs no support from philosophical theory, except in the way of disengaging its essentials.

Bosanquet is very eager to maintain the practicality of religion. He does this by drawing a distinction between God and the Absolute. In religion, good is still loaded

¹ *What Religion Is*, p. 5.

² "Philosophy according to Hegel's conception of it, does but draw the conclusion supplied by the premises of religion: it supplements and rounds off into coherence the religious implications."

See Wallace, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, pp. XLV, XLVI.

³ *Value*, p. 230.

with the inherent contrast to evil, and if evil were to disappear the practical attitude of religion would vanish. The inherence of evil within the religious consciousness proves the presence of evil in the consciousness of God. "God conceived as identified with the finite struggle against evil, cannot be perfection—the Absolute—in which all evil is absorbed.... The fact that the religious attitude is largely practical, and the fact that religious tradition, with one voice, admits that it contemplates God in imaginative shapes, are thus obviously in agreement. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Lord, Omnipotent, Creator, Providence—none of these terms can apply to a universe or an Absolute which has nothing outside it...."¹ God of religion is not a being for whom evil is annihilated. He is regarded as the representative of the Universe and he is overcoming evil by good. He satisfies our religious aspirations. Religious consciousness carries us to God and not to the Absolute. Thus we see, religious consciousness cannot prove to be the ultimate. It is difficult to reconcile this view with the contention as earlier set forth that man's religion offers him the best stability. How is it possible for Bosanquet to assert that in religious recognition man is secure? God of religion is an appearance of reality. He is distinct from the supreme and ultimate reality. Bosanquet promised at the outset security and stability to finite creatures in their religious recognition. Towards the end of the second Gifford volume it seems, religious consciousness is not the ultimate. It is only a step towards the perfect individuality. Bosanquet is helpless whenever he makes a distinction between God and

¹ *Value and Destiny*, p. 249

Bradley also distinguishes between God and the Absolute. "If you identify the Absolute with God," says he, "that is not the God of religion... Short of the Absolute, God cannot rest, and, having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him." See *Appearance and Reality*, p. 447 (1908). For Bradley, God of religion is only an aspect or an appearance of the Absolute.

the Absolute. If Absolute be the ultimate reality, how can we attain the Absolute? Is it through religious recognition? No. Religious recognition gives us appearance only. Bosanquet observes, "The conclusion is, in a word, that the God of religion, inherent in the completest experience, is an appearance of reality as distinct from being the whole and ultimate reality."¹ Thus he himself raises the difficulty: "If the standpoint of religion is not ultimate; if it is possible and necessary to conceive of the Absolute as something of which religion itself, with the conflict of good and evil, is not a complete account, to what attitude or mode of recognition on our part does such a conception correspond?"

We know, Bosanquet definitely rejects the idea that philosophy is superior to religion. But he does not give up altogether the claims of philosophy. He wants to speak something more on it. "There is always, I suppose, a normal and general mode of consciousness, and awareness of a certain kind of object corresponding to every reflective attitude which really proves distinct and well-grounded; and to this philosophy, as the theory of the Absolute, is no exception."² Somewhat later he observes, "The universe is the magnificent theatre of all the wealth of life, and good and evil are within it. This I think, we are aware of when at our best; and this awareness corresponds to the sense of the Absolute whole within which religion itself is a feature.... Here in passing we have elucidated our common sense of the Absolute, the real awareness of an inclusive world to which philosophy as a reflective theory corresponds and which widens and sweetens our religious consciousness." Now, we find, our knowledge and attainment of the Absolute are dependent on the awareness of the whole. When have we the

¹ *Value*, p. 255.

² See *Value and Destiny*, pp. 310-12.

awareness? Bosanquet replies—we have the awareness when we are at our best. Let the question be pushed—How do we know that we are at our best? Bosanquet here does not give a clear and decisive answer. Surely we cannot be at our best in religious consciousness for it leads to God and not to the Absolute.

In the next place, what is the status of God in the scheme of the real? Is it an entity other than the Absolute? Bosanquet replies, No. It is simply an appearance of the ultimate reality. Why does the appearance exist? Bosanquet is silent on the point. Sankara's God is the Absolute when it is enveloped in *māyā*. Is the Absolute of Bosanquet possessed of *māyā*? No. Bosanquet does not introduce any such conception into his philosophy.

There are some who contend that all these difficulties are due to the arbitrary distinction which Bosanquet makes between God and the Absolute. He could have avoided all difficulties if he had confessed that there is no distinction between God and the Absolute. Dr. Ward defines the Absolute as God-and-the-world.¹ Prof. Pringle Pattison too suggests the same definition. God, for him, exists only as a self-communicating life. The eternal fashion of the cosmic life is that creation is a self-revelation of the Divine in and to finite spirits. "This then," Pringle Pattison says, "is the true Absolute." "The Absolute then means, God-and-the-world." The Absolute is God-and-the-world.² But in order to maintain the practicality of religion, Bosanquet is bound to make a distinction between God and the Absolute. "The practical attitude means that the contradiction between good and evil survives, and the survival of this contradiction necessarily implies that God as worshipped in religion is not a being for whom

¹ *The Realm of Ends*, p. 241 (2nd Ed.).

² *The Idea of God*, p. 433 (2nd Ed.) (Supplementary notes).

evil is annihilated.”¹ Thus we see, Bosanquet is bound to distinguish between God and the Absolute. But once he makes the distinction he becomes quite helpless. The conception of God becomes loosely connected with the rest of his philosophy.

¹ *Value*, pp. 249-50,

CHAPTER VII

THE STATE AND FREE-WILL

Is the finite individual possessed of free-will? This problem will engage our attention in this chapter. Professor Bosanquet discusses the question of freedom in relation to the State in his famous book—*The Philosophical Theory of the State*. In it he preaches philosophical idealism in relation to the State which was first propounded by Plato. The ideas of Plato about the State, which were popularized in Germany by Hegel, were subsequently elaborated by Bosanquet. So in this respect, his originality does not lie in the formulation of a theory but in its elucidation.

The Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle argue that man is a social or political animal. It is the nature of man to live in society. The real nature of the individual can only be developed in society. 'It is only by living in society that a man can realise all that he has in him to be.' Hegel also speaks in the same tone. The conception of the State as a guarantor of freedom is developed in his philosophy. Thus he says, "Nothing short of the State is the actualization of freedom."¹ How can the State guarantee the freedom and personality of the individual? It does so in virtue of the fact that the State is a real personality and has a real will. Here we come across a paradox. My freedom can be best ensured only by myself. It appears that the State, by imposing

¹ See Joad, *Modern Political Theory*, p. 12.

"The State is the actualization of concrete freedom." Quoted by Sterrett, *The Ethics of Hegel*, p. 197.

limitations on my action, hampers my freedom. Some idealists meet the paradox in the following way. We are said to have acted freely when we act in accordance with our real will. The State is an embodiment of the real will of the individual. The real will is the General Will. "Representing as it does that aspect of the individual's will which harmonizes with the wills of others, his will, that is to say, for the good of all, including self, as opposed to his will for the good of self at the expense of all, it is of necessity always rational and always right.... It follows, therefore, that the actions of the State in so far as they proceed from the General Will, must always be irreproachably right in the sense that they represent what is best in individual wills." ¹

Bosanquet too begins with the same paradox in another form. For him, the idea of self-government rests on a paradox. It is true, self-government is the ground and justification of all political obligations. But if there is to be a government at all, others must exercise authority over me. How can this be compatible with self-government (government of myself by myself)? Bosanquet overcomes the difficulty by pointing out that there is no fundamental opposition between two selves. By fellowship with other individuals, one acquires the capacity for life. Self-government is only possible when we think that human beings are not naturally isolated from one another. They are not artificially brought together in the State. Self-government is not the government of each by himself but of each by others. To be ruled by others is tantamount to be ruled by oneself for there is no natural isolation and distinction between one self and another. Bosanquet meets the paradox in the following way: "We must not treat the self as *ipso facto* annihilated by government; nor must we treat government as a pale reflection, pliable

¹ C. E. M. Joad, *Modern Political Theory*, pp. 12-13.

to all the vagaries of the actual self. Nor, again, must we divide the inseparable content of life, and endeavour to assign part to the assertion of the individual as belonging to self, and part to his impact on others, as belonging to government. We must take the two factors of the working idea of self-government in their full antagonism, and exhibit through and because of this, the fundamental unity at their root, and the necessity and conditions of their coherence. We must show, in short, how man, the actual man of flesh and blood, demands to be governed; and how government, which puts real force upon him, *is essential, as he is aware, to his becoming what he has it in him to be.*"¹

From the above account, we learn that the State is the embodiment of General Will. Rousseau distinguishes the General Will from the will of all. The will of all is the summation of particular wills. It may be unanimous but is not something general in nature. Rousseau suggests that "it is the community of interest or the nature of the object and not the number of voices, which distinguishes the General Will from the will of all."² The General Will, in other words, aims at common good. "It is that identity between my particular will and the wills of all my associates in the body politic which makes it possible to say that in all social co-operation, and in submitting to even forcible constraint, when imposed by society in the true common interest, I am obeying only myself and am actually attaining my freedom."³ The General Will is an organic unity. It is a principle which brings all individuals into a harmonious concrete whole. The opposition between self and others is gone and sovereignty becomes the exercise of the General Will.

¹ *Philosophical Theory of the State* (1925), pp. 72-73 (4th Ed.).

² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

But every individual may have a particular will, contrary to or divergent from the General Will. "His private interest may prompt him quite differently from the common interest; his absolute and naturally independent existence may make him regard what he owes to the common cause as a gratuitous contribution the loss of which will be less harmful to others than the payment of it will be burdensome to him; and regarding the moral person that constitutes the State as an imaginary being because it is not a man, he would be willing to enjoy the rights of a citizen without being willing to fulfil the duties of a subject."¹ Such a man brings the progress of society to a deadlock. What steps would society take in such a state of affairs? "Whoever refuses to obey the General Will shall be constrained to do so by the whole body; which means nothing else than that *he shall be forced to be free*...."² A somewhat paradoxical result follows from this conception. The policeman who arrests the thief and the magistrate who locks him up are really expressing the thief's real will to be arrested and locked up. The policeman and the magistrate are the officials of the State which expresses the real will of the thief who is a member of it. Moreover the thief is acting freely when he is being taken to the police station.

So far, we have tried to remove the contradictions that beset the concept of self-government. We have seen, virtually self-government is government by others. Such a concept of self-government gives us the true idea of freedom. Bosanquet is very explicit on the question of freedom. Every individual feels that he has to expand his own self. Expansion of the self is needed to develop the best that we have in us. We are always endeavouring to become ourselves. In order to achieve this end every one must expand his own self. Bosanquet says that

¹ & ² H. J. Tozer, *Rousseau's Social Contract*, p. 113.

freedom is the condition of this expansion or of becoming ourselves. Freedom, for him, means acquiescence in a law and order in which our universal self is realized. Liberty means 'being ourselves most completely.' Self-government in the sense as taken above, asks us to subject our private contradictory wills to the General Will. In the subjection to the General Will, the private will is expanded and freed. It is true, the system of law and order restrains our private wills. But in another sense it makes for the possibility of developing our true selves. Thus Bosanquet writes, "It is possible for us to acquiesce, as rational beings, in a law and order which on the whole makes for the possibility of asserting our true or universal selves, at the very moment when this law and order is constraining our particular private wills in a way which we resent, or even condemn. Such a law and order, maintained by force, which we recognise as on the whole the instrument of our greatest self-affirmation, is a system of rights; and our liberty or, to use a good old expression, our liberties may be identified with such a system considered as the condition and guarantee of our becoming the best that we have it in us to be, that is, of becoming ourselves."¹

Hegel and Bosanquet denounce in strongest term license. But they advocate the cause of true liberty. License means working without constraint. True freedom, on the other hand, necessitates constraint. The State, by imposing certain limitations on our private wills, makes us free. It nourishes and sustains us. It expands our ideas and helps us in being ourselves most completely. General Will is the real will of the individual. Some critics take the General Will as a mere figment of imagination. But if the General Will be only a figment, how is self-government possible? We have seen, self-government is possible only on the Hegelian principle which

¹ *Philosophical Theory of State*, p. 119.

teaches that the State 'is the objective spirit and that the individual has its truth, existence and ethical status only in being a member of it.' The General Will is my own substantive will. In obeying it, I am only obeying myself. 'The notion of freedom must not be taken in the sense of the casual free-will of each individual, but in the sense of the reasonable will, the will in and for itself.'

Many trenchant criticisms have been urged against this idealistic conception of General Will. Presently we shall consider some of them. The theory of General Will, when analysed comes to this. There is in me a real self, my real will which is opposed to what I very often am. In other words, the idealists distinguish between the real will and the actual will. Morris Ginsberg offers the following criticism. "There may be something in each individual, and therefore in a society of individuals, which responds to a conception of an ultimate good or idea of perfection. This however, is badly described as 'real' will. The actual wills of individuals contain many elements which are not in correspondence with such an ideal of perfection' and these elements are quite as 'real' as the 'real' will. If, on the other hand, by the latter is meant a fully articulate scheme of organised purposes or ends, this is strictly speaking, an ideal and not a real will."¹ Ginsberg's criticisms are valid only psychologically. Speaking psychologically, all human volitions that occur, are real. But the metaphysician's standpoint is different. From the standpoint of the whole, the Ultimate Reality, only those volitions are real which are self-consistent and harmonious. The actual will of the individual is often contradictory and inconsistent. The actual will is real in so far as it tallies with the General Will which is self-consistent and harmonious. Hence for the idealists, the

¹ *The Psychology of Society*, p. 90.

ideal will is the real will. This is nothing but an application of the idealistic dictum—The Ideal is the Real.

The General Will is embodied in the State. How is the General Will determined? How do people determine the General Will with regard to a particular decision? They do it by the vote of the majority. Is the majority always right? The majority is often swayed by private considerations. "The electorate may be hypnotized by the popular press, drugged with advertisements, deafened by the 'boosting' of so-called business candidates."¹ To-day there are several States in the world. Do they embody General Will? If Bosanquet were alive to-day, he would have said—No, many of the present States are not States at all. They never embody the General Will of the members. What Bosanquet describes is not the practice of existing States but the attributes of the Ideal State which embodies the true General Will of the members.

Is it at all necessary that there should be the confluence of at least two wills in order that there may be a General Will? Rousseau and Bosanquet are of opinion that the General Will is the will which aims at common good. General Will does not depend on the number of votes. From these assertions, we may reasonably draw certain conclusions. The will of a single individual is the General Will when it aims at common good. The will of the minority may embody the General Will. The will of the Dictator is the real will of the community when he works with an eye to the common good. How then, can we determine the General Will? How can we ascertain whether the majority or the minority is right? Here we submit, theoretically the idealistic theory of General Will is perhaps flawless but it suffers ship-wreck when we care to make a practical application of it.

¹ *Modern Political Theory*, p. 3.

What is the real character of the State? Is it simply a government? Bosanquet answers, "It is not merely a political fabric but includes the entire hierarchy of institutions by which life is determined, from the family to the trade, and from the trade to the church and the university. It includes all of them, not as mere collection of the growths of the country, but as the structure which gives life and meaning to the political whole, while receiving from it mutual adjustment, and therefore expansion and a more liberal air."¹ This State disciplines and nourishes the individual. It seems, Bosanquet constructs the State as an absolute structure. But here he is often misunderstood. Prof. Hobhouse accuses Bosanquet of setting up 'the State as a greater being, a spirit, a super-personal entity, in which individuals with their private consciences or claims of right, their happiness or their misery, are merely subordinate elements.' (*Metaphysical Theory of the State*, p. 27.) "The individual is absorbed in the organised political society, the State of which he is a member." We agree with Prof. Haldar when he maintains, "All this is sheer misunderstanding. Bosanquet has nowhere said that the General Will is something over and above the particular wills of individuals in which they are lost. What he maintains is that the wills of individuals, in so far as they make the common good their end, is the General Will. 'The social whole is of the nature of a continuous or self-identical being pervading a system of differences and realised in them.' In interpreting society Bosanquet, in short, makes use of the organic unity...."² Here we must guard against a possible misconception. Bosanquet's Absolute must not be confounded with his State. The State is an organic conception. It exists in the phenomenal region. The Absolute of Bosanquet

¹ *Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. 140.

² *Neo-Hegelianism*, pp. 299-300.

is the perfect individuality where all distinctions are merged and reconciled. The State, for him, is only an element of the Absolute. It is urged against Hegel that he deems the State as the earthly God. But this is not the whole truth about Hegel. Earthly God, for him, is not the only God. There is the Absolute Spirit, which is ultimately real. Bosanquet too warns us not to confuse between earthly good and heavenly good. "It is then only spiritual goods that is real and stable, earthly and material aims are delusive and dangerous, and the root of strife."¹

So far, we have viewed the problem of free-will from the standpoint of the State. We have discussed the question—how can we act freely? We have found out the answer from Bosanquet's book. We act freely when we will our own real will. To will the real will is to will the General Will. The General Will is embodied in the State. But we have just seen, the State is only a phenomenal affair. It is a mere element of the Absolute. Let us now view the problem from the standpoint of the Absolute or ultimate reality. In what sense are we free agents? Here we face the problem from the true metaphysical angle. Bosanquet says that the truest type of individuality is the concrete universal. It is a world or a cosmos. There is nothing outside it by which it can be determined, and, hence, it alone is free in the truest sense of the term. The concrete universal or the Absolute exhibits the spirit of non-contradiction most fully. The finite beings have got an impulse towards this spirit of non-contradiction. The freedom of a finite self arises from its membership of the concrete universal. As a member, the finite self also is a cosmos but it is a part of the cosmos. "The character of being a cosmos carries with it its own mode of self-determination and initiative."²

¹ *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, p. xiv.

² *Principle*, p. 320.

Freedom does not consist in keeping the self aloof from the influence of the environment for the self is the inwardness of the environment itself. True freedom of the self lies in the direction towards unity and coherence.

So a finite self is free for it follows its own self-determination. But the critic may object. The present action of the finite self is determined by the past out of which it arises. Bosanquet answers by saying that "all logical process is the reshaping of a world of content by its own universal spirit."¹ In another place he writes, "Nothing past, nothing external is operative in the agent's choice. It is all gathered up and made into the agent himself, and its remodelling in him is one with his creative production of a new deed."²

Bosanquet likens the free action of an individual to the creative freedom of a piece of art. The creative freedom of art lies in the 'spirit of logic.' It means that 'its creativeness lies in its fulness and penetration, not in arbitrariness and discontinuity with reality.'³ The same 'spirit of logic' rules over the finite self. A finite self is free for it is creative and originative according to its own universal law. It is self-determined. Self-determination means the impulse towards unity and coherence (the positive spirit of non-contradiction).

Our result so far is this. The finite individual self is free for it is a member of the concrete universal. It is a world and reality is a world of worlds. The finite self as a world is continuous with other worlds and with the whole. This is the picture of the universe as an organic unity. But the old question arises. Does Bosanquet stick to it? In the succeeding chapter we shall see that all finite selves have been reduced to mere elements.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

² *Ibid.*, p. 355.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xxxiv.

They are no longer members of the Absolute or the Concrete Universal. If finite selves are so lost in the Absolute, what then is the good of talking of human freedom? From the side of the Absolute, then, the question of finite free-will is simply irrelevant.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ABSOLUTE AND THE FINITE INDIVIDUAL

From the finite individual, we now pass on to the Absolute. The crux of all philosophy lies in the reconciliation of the Absolute with the finite individual. We know, Bosanquet starts from the Hegelian concrete universal. He starts with high hopes of attributing to finite beings their due share in the scheme of the real. He says that the main business of the universe is the making of souls. But towards the end of the present chapter we shall see that all hopes have been dashed to the ground. All souls laboriously developed at high cost, have simply been dissolved in the Absolute.

Before we dive into details, it will be wise on our part to introduce the Hegelian view of finite selfhood. Hegel's Absolute idea is, as Caird interprets it, "the idea of a self-consciousness which manifests itself in the difference of self and not-self, that through this difference, and by overcoming it, it may attain the highest unity with itself."¹ Hegel's Absolute is not a unity in which all differences are lost. It is rather the unity which realises itself in the differences. It is the unity of self-consciousness which exists in and through the plurality of finite objects. "Man as spirit," Hegel says, "is a reflection of God."² He is not a mere transitory phenomenon, a creature of the hour. If he is a reflection, he is a necessary reflection. His existence is essential to the self-realization of the Absolute. But here, our philosopher deviates from the true Hegelian path. He writes, "The general formula

¹ *Hegel*, p. 183.

² *Philosophy of Religion*, English Translation, Vol. III, p. 46.

of the Absolute,the transmutation and rearrangement of particular experiences, and also of the contents of particular finite minds, by inclusion in a completer whole of experience, is a matter of everyday verification."¹ The ideas of transmutation and rearrangement at once make us sceptical about the real ontological status of the finite individual. It seems, finite individuals are passing phenomena. They are mere transitory appearances.

Whenever Bosanquet discusses the question of finite individuality, he starts with the formal distinctness of selves.* He does not deny that the distinctness of particular persons is a fact in practical life. But he warns us not to loose sight of the underlying unity which is often overlooked. The common conviction is that personal feelings are private and incommunicable and individuality lies in exclusiveness. But however private and unshareable feelings may be, they always imply a universal objective content which is the common possession of all finite minds. The objective content is comprehended by them in different ways, but the content of what is variously comprehended is always the same. Bosanquet writes, "The pure privacy and incommunicability of feeling as such is superseded in all possible degrees by the self-transcendence and universality of the contents with which it is unified."²

According to Bosanquet, true individuality lies not in exclusiveness but in the expansion of the self and its identification of itself with other selves in common interests and movements. He says that it is impotence and no mysterious limitation that keeps men apart from one another. "At their strongest, they become confluent." In social interests the individual becomes one with his fellows. In science, art and philosophy he shares the universal interests of humanity.

¹ *Principle*, p. 373.

² *Value*, p. 38.

* * But Bosanquet adopts a disparaging tone towards it

Bosanquet is not content with the assertion that a self is at its best when it is expanded and coalesces with other selves. In the next place, he says that all finite souls find their true individuality when they are merged in the Absolute. Bradley and Bosanquet are of opinion that the Absolute is a whole in which all finites blend and are resolved. The ultimate fruition of finite selfhood lies in such an absorption.

The ideas of merging and blending suggest important issues. At this point, let us attack the main problem of the present chapter. The question is whether the finite individual is a member or an element of the Absolute. The difference between a member and an element is very significant. The conception of element does away with the very idea of self. The contribution of an element is the contribution of a quality or a predicate. But a member is a self which is a unique expression of the Absolute. It is a centre into which the ultimate reality pours its own being. Again it makes its unique contribution to the life of the whole. Professor Bosanquet has the greatest tendency to call the finite individuals elements and not members of the whole. In his *Logic* he writes that the only ultimate subject of predication is the "one true individual Real." All finite individuals are 'in ultimate analysis connexions of content within the real individual to which they belong,' and of which they are therefore 'ultimately predicates.'¹ In the second Gifford Volume he definitely asserts, "The finite self, like everything in the universe, is now and here beyond escape an element in the Absolute."² And in the footnote he adds, "I do not say a member of the Absolute. Such an expression might imply that it is, separately and with relative independence, a standing differentiation of the Absolute."

¹ *Logic*, Vol. II, pp. 258-59 (2nd Ed.).

² *Value and Destiny*, pp. 257-58.

Again he declares in the same spirit, "Spiritual individuals must qualify the universe not merely as subordinate existants, which declare themselves adjectival in claiming attachment to their substance, but more finally and completely, as predicates...."¹ Professor Pringle Pattison is inclined to criticise Bosanquet by saying that his theory does not contain the idea of self at all. "The world is dissolved into a collection of qualities or adjectives which are ultimately housed in the Absolute."²

Mr. Bradley has a similar tendency to disparage the finite beings. He views the question of souls from the side of the Absolute. "It may be instructive," says Mr. Bradley, "to consider the question (of souls) from the side of the Absolute. We might be tempted to conclude that these souls are the Reality, or at least must be real. But that conclusion would be false, for the souls would fall within the realm of appearance and error. They would be, but, as such, they would not have reality. They would require a resolution and a recomposition, in which their individualities would be transmuted and absorbed.... The plurality of souls in the Absolute is therefore appearance and their existence is not genuine.... To gain consistency and truth it must be merged, and recomposed in a result in which its speciality must vanish."³ Bradley thinks that the finite selves as such do not possess any value for the Absolute. As to the final destiny of finite beings he says, "We have a re-arrangement not merely of things but of their internal elements. We have an all-pervasive transfusion with a re-blending of all material. And we can hardly say that the Absolute consists of finite things, when the things, as such, are there transmuted and have lost their individual natures."⁴ Professor

¹ *Life and finite individuality*, p. 100 (*Symposium*).

² *Idea of God*, p. 271 (2nd Ed.).

³ *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 304-6 (1916).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 529 (1916).

Bosanquet too tells us that the content of the imperfect individual has to be "transmuted and re-arranged."¹

Thus we see, both Mr. Bradley and professor Bosanquet are very fond of using such expressions as "transmuted," "absorbed," or "transformed" whenever they have to speak of the final destiny of finite beings. They emphatically assert that the finite beings as such cannot exist in the Absolute. The question arises, what becomes of the finite self when it is absorbed? The result is that there is no formal self. Only the readjusted contents of such a self survive in the Absolute. Only the harmonized values cling to the ultimate reality. This is the only contribution that we can make to the Absolute experience. And this contribution must be conceived as the contribution of an element. It is, as Pringle Pattison suggests, "a peculiar flavour or tang to universal experience."

Why does Professor Bosanquet treat the finite individuals of his philosophy as elements of the whole? The reason is not far to seek. Both Mr. Bradley and Professor Bosanquet think that an unmediated pluralism is the only alternative to their own position. Bosanquet's entire polemic is directed against the tendency to over-emphasize the exclusiveness of the finite self. But he goes to the other extreme. The strongly monistic tendency impels him to treat the finite life as a negligible process. Thus in combating pluralism, he tends to pass into a somewhat Spinozistic monism.

What is the real truth about the relation of Absolute to finite individual? We agree with Prof. Pringle Pattison when he suggests "that the whole conception of blending and merging, as applied to finite beings, depends on the failure to recognise that every finite being must possess a substantive existence." Professor Bosanquet and Mr. Bradley regard the finite individuals as mere elements

¹ *Logic*, Vol. II, p. 258 (2nd Ed.).

or predicates. But "to be a self is to be a formed will, originating its own actions and accepting ultimate responsibility for them." He is not a mere pipe through which the Absolute pours itself. Pringle Pattison says, "From the side of the Absolute the meaning of the finite process must lie in the creation of a world of individual spirits: for to such alone can He reveal himself, and from them receive the answering tribute of love and adoration."¹ And he suggests that the nature of the finite individual lies in being a whole of content, "constituting a unique focalization or expression of the Absolute, and thus making its unique contribution to the life of the whole."²

Prof. Bosanquet is very eager to save the contents of the self at the cost of its form. He repeatedly urges that the readjusted contents of the finite self survive in the Absolute. According to him, we do not demand the continuance of our formal self. We demand the preservation of our interests and affections which carry us beyond our formal and exclusive self. But what do we mean by the form? If by form we mean the personal limitations, idiosyncrasies and shortcomings, Bosanquet is perhaps right in repudiating it. But by form we really mean the necessary and inseparable counterpart of content. Hence we are by no means justified in alienating one from the other. If content survives, the form too must survive. And if values live, persons too must live for values inhere only in persons.

Now, we sum up our discussion. Prof. Bosanquet cannot satisfactorily solve the question of the one and the many. The Absolute, for him, is the only fontal reality. The finite individuals melt into thin air. But he sets enormous value to the finite attainments. He

¹ *Idea of God*, p. 295 (2nd Ed.)

² *Ibid*, p. 269.

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tries to connect finite values with the Absolute but he fails. An interesting question crops up here. Can we at all connect the eternal order with the temporal one? Plato kept the two in two compartments. According to him, the Ideas or the Forms constitute a real world, whereas the world of sensible things is only semi-real. We have knowledge of the Forms. It is of the Forms that we have knowledge as opposed to mere opinion which clings to the sense-world.¹ Opinion takes cognizance of the fleeting and changing things of sense. The world of Forms will not die even when this sensible world vanishes. In other words, the realm of Ideas does not require the world of sensible particulars for its sustenance. Śaṅkara's Brahman has no need of the Jīvas. But Hegel's Absolute needs the finites and needs them most. Bosanquet's greatest tendency is to maintain the prestige of the Absolute even at the cost of the finites. If the temporal be a phenomenal manifestation of eternal, the temporal is real just as a phenomenon is real. But if the temporal be an illusory manifestation of eternal, the temporal is inexplicable just as an illusion is inexplicable. It is neither real nor unreal. There are some philosophers who think that the temporal is only an element of the eternal. It seems, Bosanquet supports the last view. In our succeeding chapter, we shall consider Bosanquet's conception of time. But before we leave the present chapter, we must needs emphasise the point that Prof. Bosanquet regards the finite individuals as elements and not as members of the whole.* Henceforward, we shall treat the finite beings of his philosophy as mere elements of the real.

¹ There are admirable passages in Plato's "*Republic*" which give us the best discussion on knowledge and opinion (BK. V.). See p. 189 ff (Davis and Vaughan), Translation.

* It is interesting to note that the Indian thinker Śaṅkara does not think that the final destiny of the individual is to be a mere element of the Absolute. In *mokṣa* the individual becomes the Absolute.

CHAPTER IX

THE ABSOLUTE AND CHANGE

No system of philosophy can be perfect which does not present a satisfactory solution of the problem of change. The problem of change is as old as philosophy itself. Things seem to persist and things seem to change. How is it possible for things to persist and yet to change? How is this deadlock in thought to be removed? How are we to have the static and the dynamic views of the world reconciled? Since the very dawn of human speculation, thinkers are trying to arrive at a proper solution of the burning problem. Heraclitus is deeply impressed with the fact of change. He concludes that permanence is an illusion. Things are in an endless process of becoming. The Eleatics take the opposite view and deny the very possibility of change. Change, according to them, is illusory. This dual between the Heraclitians and the Eleatics has been carried even to the present day. To-day philosophers insist on the objectivity of time and change. The neo-idealist, the neo-realist, the pragmatist and the instrumentalist denounce in strongest terms the conception of a block universe. They intend to affirm that reality is a history or an unending process. Change is the character of the real or change is the real. Again there are some who affirm that the future is to complete the past. 'The good is to be won by the race and for the race: it lies in the future and can result only from prolonged and collective endeavour.' The main purpose of all these schools is 'the repudiation of any view which can affirm a perfection in the universe apprehensible through religious

experience and philosophical speculation, not limited to the series of temporal events.*

Bosanquet agrees with the votaries of change when they say that change is an obvious fact which nobody can deny. Change or time exists. The question is whether it is in the Absolute or the Absolute in it. Bosanquet gives us his views about the question in a neat formula, $7+5=12$. 'If 12 were not the same as $7+5$, the Judgment would not be true. Again if it were not different, the Judgment would not be a Judgment.' Then he says, "What you have in this simplest example, then, is an eternal novelty. It is the expression of something which parting from itself, remains within itself, and which, being always old, is yet perennially new."¹ Votaries of change are of opinion that if novelty, progress and difference are to be achieved, the identity of the whole as a whole must be abandoned. Bosanquet accuses them of committing a blunder in elementary logic. They have not understood the formula, $7+5=12$. "When once for all the principle of the Judgment $7+5=12$ is mastered, we grasp the paradox at once of reality and of inference. The whole does not abandon itself to give rise to difference; it is as a whole, and not as surrendering its totality but precisely in virtue of its wholeness, that it is the source of differentiation."²

It is obvious that Bosanquet does not deny the existence of change or time. The whole does not change. It can be said to change only 'if it departs from its unity of character and value.' But its nature reveals itself in

* See *Meeting of Extremes*, p. 121.

¹ *Ibid*, p. 104.

F. C. S. Schiller says that the formula ($7+5=12$) is hardly a good example of an eternal truth because it is not properly a truth at all. It is not properly a Judgment, but only a proposition. And the qualities of truth and falsity are reserved for Judgment. See *Mind*, April, 1922.

² *Ibid*, p. 112.

changes. The revelations of the whole are in time. The whole contains within itself its revelations and time. The succession of finite phenomena is the expression of the infinite reality through finite spirits. In this vast universe we come across a fundamental unity, a simple energy which reveals itself in time. But "the foundational nature of all that is, while containing the infinite changes which are the revelation of its inexhaustible life, not confinable within a single direction or temporal career, is not itself and as such engaged in a progress and mutation." ¹

According to Bosanquet, all times have their unity in the Absolute but the unity itself is timeless. The unity of all times is not the unity of one series. All times do not form a grand series in the Absolute. They are interrelated and unified but their interrelation and unification falls outside time. In other words, Bosanquet's Absolute contains time but at the same time transcends it. "Its self-revelation," says he, "need not proceed by any one of what are called progresses or advances, which involve moving away from its own nature and diminishing itself on one side as it intensifies itself at another. That is the growing of a finite creature. An infinite whole.... must live out alike to all its sides and aspects, must expand into and live itself out in all values, but constrict itself into a history in respect of none." ²

It is worth while to consider the claims of a possibility. The real universe is all that is but there are the possibilities. The universe can change within the bounds of possibilities. Thus the gates of future are wide open. The universe is not merely what is but what may be. Bosanquet raises his objection against such a view. He writes "Possibility is within the real, not reality within the possible." Here

¹ *Meeting of Extremes*, p. 210.

² *Ibid*, p. 183.

we arrive at a final answer from Bosanquet. "There are two extremist views, both representing *prima facie* demands of human nature. Let time be the most real of realities and give us a fighting chance of making over the universe into something nearer to what we take to be our heart's desire. Or let time be a minor incident or phenomenon in a whole, planned with certainty to bring us in the end to our heart's desire, whether on earth or in heaven.... We repudiate, then, both of the extreme standpoints. We consider time as an appearance only, a position which the former doctrine denies, but in opposition to the latter doctrine as an appearance inseparable from the membership of finiteness in infinity, and therefore from the self-revelation of a reality which as a whole is timeless." ¹

Bosanquet supports his views on change by an appeal to the true meaning of teleology. We have already seen that the debate on change has divided philosophers into two factions. Progressists put the Absolute in time whereas the perfectionists put time in the Absolute. 'Bosanquet thinks that the concept of teleology is involved in the debate as basal to it.' In the ordinary sense, teleology is only a psychological idea and it cannot be applied to the perfect whole or the Absolute. The Absolute does not use means to accomplish ends. And it has no unfulfilled desire. But teleology can be understood in a deeper sense. In its profounder meaning it is a non-temporal category. As such it can be applied to the Absolute, and when so applied, it implies that time is in the Absolute. In the ordinary sense, "it refers to a purposive order involving items related to each other as end and means; taken in this sense it is applicable only to a series in which conscious purposes are fulfilled and is essentially identical

¹ *Value and Destiny*, pp. 294-96.

with perfectivity. But there is a deeper interpretation in which the term refers to a nexus of relations within a perfect whole ; here it means perfection.”¹

Like many other idealists, Bosanquet regards change as an appearance. In this connexion it must be remembered that change is an appearance only from the standpoint of the Absolute. Change implies instability. Plato regards change as mere lapse and Aristotle as a tendency to realization. But both view the real as changeless. It is true that Aristotle regards God as activity or energy but this activity knows no change. For Śaṅkara, the real is changeless. For Bradley, ‘nothing that is perfectly real moves.’* It should be remembered in this connexion that these idealists do not deny change. They affirm change and explain it. In Śaṅkara, change is unreal since it implies instability. On no occasion can change cling to Śaṅkara’s Brahman. Somehow the pure Absolute Being falls into the trap of *māyā* and gives rise to the phenomenal world which contains change. In Bradley, change is an appearance which is contradictory in character ; but it is not non-existent. In Bosanquet’s philosophy, the Absolute by virtue of its absoluteness or wholeness gives rise to changes. Changes occur within the Absolute but they do not disturb the completeness or perfection of the Absolute in any way.

Is the Absolute of Bosanquet a dead and static whole ? As a true Hegelian, he does not accept the charge of deadness as justifiable. Because the universe is a complete and unified whole, it is not, say the Hegelians, either a static or a finite whole. The Absolute does not change

¹ See *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 615.

* Bradley’s Absolute enters into, but is itself incapable of, evolution and progress. “The Absolute has no history of its own, though it contains histories without number.”

App. and Reality, p. 499 (1916).

but it contains histories without number. This is Bosanquet's reiteration. But we raise the question. Does it improve the situation in any way? According to Bosanquet's theory change occurs only within the Absolute. It rises in the Absolute and dies in it. In other words, Bosanquet makes the Absolute the immanent spring from which all change arises as well as the all-embracing sea into which all change merges. But by so doing, does he not make all progress non-existent and change unreal?

Again Bosanquet's view of time is defective in another way. His Absolute may be viewed as the objective order of things. But things in their objective order are not ultimately real for they are all finite. It must be the order of things, not the things thus ordered, that is ultimately real. And this order does not involve time. An inevitable consequence of such a theory is that it cannot explain how the Absolute manifests itself in time. We have seen, Bosanquet calls time an appearance which is inevitably connected with the manifestation of the Absolute. But the question always remains; How does the timeless order manifest itself in time? Surely Bosanquet cannot advance a suitable reply to this pertinent query.

CHAPTER X

THE ABSOLUTE AND EVIL

Another eternal problem that arises in connexion with a discussion of the Absolute is the problem of evil. The problem is as old as philosophy. Thinkers are always trying to arrive at a correct solution of the problem ; but the eternal problem refuses to be solved. Bosanquet tackles the problem but he too cannot be said to have reached a definite and satisfactory conclusion. The problem is enveloped in perennial mystery. Two facts about it, however, are absolutely certain. Firstly, evil is real and none can doubt its existence. Secondly, it cries out to be overcome. We can state with sufficient precision these two facts about evil. Thus far we can go and if we want to go beyond the limit, we are left in the hands of abstract surmises. Mysticism is one amongst the several schools of thought that explain evil away. There is the mystic and we may believe in his convictions. To a mystic, there is no evil. He gets a new scent of goodness on this earth. For him, evil is annihilated. Mysticism however is greatly a matter of feeling. Reason cannot penetrate its walls. But reason warns us not to explain evil away. On the other hand, an exercise of reason reveals the fact that evil and finiteness are intertwined.

There are some idealists who solve the problem of evil by basing their arguments on a transcendental plane. They are of opinion that, from the absolute standpoint there is nothing called evil. If we knew everything, we should see and feel that there was no evil. But it is surely

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insulting to tell a man in pain that there is no such thing as evil. Again there are some who try to solve the problem by attempting a reconciliation while 'clinging to the old idea of an omnipotent and impassible creator or an Absolute in the role of spectator.' If this be the explanation, we shall exclaim with James that 'a God who can relish such superfluities of horror is no God for human beings to appeal to.' But Bosanquet views the problem from a different perspective. He never denies the existence of evil. Only he says that it is reconciled and readjusted in the Absolute. For him, evil is never an illusion.* What does Bosanquet mean by the expression—readjustment of evil in the Absolute? All that he means is this: in the finite world, we find that evil is opposed to good. There is a sort of antagonistic relation between the two. But in the Absolute they are readjusted. By this we mean that in the Absolute, evil and good are somehow made to exist in a relation of friendship and amity.

As to the cause of evil's existence, Bosanquet writes in the first Gifford volume, "Broadly speaking I suggest, experience indicates that a soul which has never known pain, like a nation which has never known war, has no depth of being, and is not a personality at all."¹ This much is clear. Pain, contradiction and evil exist so that there may be the formation of good souls. Formation of good souls is only possible when the souls are made to pass through the fire of pain and evil. Evil serves as a means towards the end—soul-formation. But why are souls formed? The answer is depressing. We have seen, finite souls have got a precarious existence in Bosanquet's philosophy. They are made only to be extinguished.

* Bradley too holds, "Evil and good are not illusions, but they are most certainly appearances. They are one-sided aspects, each over-ruled and transmuted in the whole." *App. and Reality*, p. 401 (1916).

¹ *Principle*, p. 245.

It is hard to reconcile Bosanquet's view of soul-formation with his reiterated doctrine that the destiny of the finite selves is to be transmuted and rearranged in the Absolute.

Bosanquet dwells on the problem of evil from two different standpoints. From the finite standpoint evil is evil and we should not palter with the truth. It exists as the finite exists. In finite life, contradictions, evils and inconsistencies do exist. Bosanquet says, "In truth the actual world is charged with contradiction.... In the life of conscious beings, again, contradiction is a felt experience as actual as pain, dissatisfaction and unrest which are forms of it or one with it."¹ Contradiction is existent.* Bosanquet says, we try, to overcome contradiction continually but as finite beings we cannot overcome it completely.

But there is the standpoint of the Absolute. Bosanquet's Absolute is a harmonious whole. It cannot contain in it contradictions or evils in their true nature. But what is a contradiction? Bosanquet says, evil and pain are one with it. "Contradiction is a deadlock caused by the attempt to bring together two or more different terms without adequate adjustment of content for their reception."² In this sense contradiction cannot be the characteristic of the ultimate reality. In the Absolute it exists in a resolved and reconciled manner. The way to remove contradictions is not to set them aside but to readjust them within a new and comprehensive unity. This is negativity, the spirit of the real. It means solved contradiction. It is the reduction of opposite things to the elementiness of an organized whole.

¹ *Principle*, pp. 227-28.

* ".....contradiction then is a characteristic of reality so far as presented in the actual world of fact. In the form of pain, dissatisfaction and unrest it may almost be called an actual existent." *Science and Philosophy*, p. 78.

² *Ibid.*, p. 225.

At the present juncture, a question of great importance arises. In the finite order, evil is a ragged end, but in the Absolute it is a finished and reconciled event. How far is the readjustment or reconciliation of an evil possible? Can logical contradictions be reconciled in the Absolute? Can the Absolute get rid of the mass of logical contradictions? Black excludes non-black in the same time and under the same circumstances. Is it possible for black in the Absolute not to exclude non-black under the same conditions? Can we suppose that the Absolute can override the laws of Identity, Contradiction and Excluded Middle? The answer is always in the negative. Next, we have got the affective evils, *viz.*, pain, suffering, discomfort, jobbery and the like. We may believe that these affective evils are somehow reconciled with good and other values in the Absolute. Thus our inquiry leads us to hold that not all evils are reconciled in the Absolute. Only the affective evils may be so readjusted. Logical evils refuse to be readjusted. They are what they are.

How does readjustment take place? Here Bosanquet does not give us any definite answer. It seems, he is content with a 'somehow.' In our opinion, the act of readjustment is an act of pure miracle. We cannot explain it on any rational hypothesis. Only we must be content with the assertion that it is miraculous and mysterious.

We have seen, Bosanquet discusses the problem of evil from two different standpoints, *viz.*, the finite and the infinite. But such a discussion suggests an interesting query. Who owns the mass of contradictions and evils as they exist for us? According to Bosanquet, the Absolute is the "totality of a hold on reality." Surely the Absolute owns our evils and contradictions. Again the Absolute owns the evils only when they are readjusted and reconciled. Here we are brought to a deadlock. Are we to suppose that the Absolute owns simultaneously the untransformed

evil and the reconciled evil? But such a supposition is unwarranted. What Bosanquet tries to say is this: for the Absolute, evil is always readjusted. From the Absolute standpoint, evil is always reconciled with good. There is no untransformed evil. Whatever needs reconciliation and readjustment for us, is already reconciled and readjusted in the Absolute. But from the finite standpoint, evil is always in antagonistic relation to good. It requires readjustment. It cries out to be overcome.

Evil is reconciled in the Absolute. But can we characterise the Absolute by evil? Bosanquet replies, "There is evil, then, within the Absolute but the Absolute is not characterised by evil."¹ The Absolute certainly contains evil, error, pain and ugliness. In it, they exist as expanded by coalescence with other values. But surely we cannot characterise it by any of these imperfections. Similarly the Absolute cannot be fully characterised by subordinate excellences. "As the perfect experience it is more than beautiful, more than pleasant, more than true and than good.... It is plain that a perfection which reconciles all these characteristics must be more than each of them. It cannot be a conjunction; it must.... be a transformation."²

Wherefrom does evil come? Here Bosanquet gives us an unsatisfying reply. In one place he writes, "We.... understand not that evil is good but that it is made out of the same stuff as good; the stuff of life, its passions and values. It is evil when it is evil, that is, when it is antagonistic to good, and impairs our values or the will to them."³ But the question arises. Why is evil antagonistic to good? They are made of the same stuff.

¹ *Value and Destiny*, p. 217.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 212-13.

This point occurs also in chapter XI.

³ *Some suggestions in Ethics*, p. 113.

There is perhaps nothing in the stuff that can set one against the other. Is there an external agent that sets them in opposition? But we have no reason to suppose like that. Thus we see, Bosanquet cannot satisfactorily explain the genesis of evil.

There is another grave question regarding the problem of evil. How is evil compatible with the goodness of God? Fortunately, for Bosanquet, no such question arises. He does not start from a good and benevolent God. He starts from the Absolute or true Individuality where everything finite remains in a reconciled manner. His Absolute is the perfect whole.

From the above considerations, it is clear that Bosanquet's account of evil is not without its defects. Looked at from the finite standpoint, evil is opposed to good but from the absolute standpoint, it is reconciled with good. But as finite beings, we are concerned with the finite standpoint. Evil exists for us. And we try to overcome it. Our daily life is not one of despair. We believe that evil is being overcome. Unless we knew, in some way, that there is a way out, evil would be too heavy for us to bear. But what is the secret of success? Here Bosanquet introduces the faith of a good man and agrees to it. "Evil is evil; once more, you have not to palter with this truth; but all the same, it can be overcome; not at a distance, but now and here; and the secret of overcoming it is to feel that it is overcome, and to treat it practically as a conquered thing."¹ Thus we see, Bosanquet is inclined to strike a practical cord. He takes recourse to the psychology of belief. Believe it in this way and you get the wished—for result. No amount of theoretical speculation or moral preaching can make us think that evil is being overcome. We can think that

¹ *Some suggestions in Ethics* pp. 104-5.

evil is overcome only when we believe that it is so. We should also act in accordance with the belief. But here Bosanquet raises a voice of caution. Evil is being overcome continually but it cannot be overcome completely in the finite world. Only in perfection, it is completely overcome. Only in the Absolute it is completely reconciled.

CHAPTER XI

AN ESTIMATE OF BOSANQUET'S PHILOSOPHY

We have at last come to the end of our study. In this chapter we shall make an estimate of Bosanquet's philosophy. The tap-root of Bosanquet's central thoughts lies in Hegel.* His philosophical principles are formed under the influence of T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley. But Bradley's influence on him is greater than that of Green. In a letter addressed to Signor Vivante, he writes, "Now I am follower of Bradley, though I was a pupil of Green and still value his work very highly. But Bradley's system is very complete and original, though founded on a very profound study of Hegel."¹

Empiricism was the principal ruler in the domain of British Philosophy when Stirling published the epoch-making work, *Secret of Hegel*. It gave an impetus to the study of Hegel and led to the foundation of the school of Philosophy known as British Neo-Hegelianism.²

About the time of the publication of Stirling's great work, other philosophers also had been studying Hegel. Among them were Green and Edward Caird. When Green entered the arena of philosophical thought he found that the empiricists had reduced mind and reality into aggregates and series of unrelated impressions. He fought against

* It is interesting to note that the root of entire European philosophical thought can be traced to Plato. Prof. Whitehead goes so far as to describe the whole European philosophical tradition as consisting of 'a series of footnotes to Plato.'

¹ *Bosanquet and his friends* (Letters edited by Muirhead), p. 262. (Also quoted in Chapter I.)

² T. H. Green, Edward Caird, William Wallace, F. H. Bradley, B. Bosanquet, D. G. Ritchie, Sir Henry Jones and others belong to this school,

empiricism and urged with great emphasis that, apart from relations, sensations are nothing.¹ Bosanquet too condemns the idea that reality is a mere heap of unrelated impressions. For him, a thing is true only in its relation to other things and to the whole. But it should not be supposed that Bosanquet's reality or the Absolute is a mere cob-web of relations. It is true, his reality or the Absolute contains relations. But it also transcends them. The reality for Bosanquet, is thought but it is not merely relational or discursive thought. Again thought can know reality but this thought is not merely discursive but in part intuitive. We have touched on this point elsewhere.² As we proceed we shall also speak more on it.

The basis of Green's thought is Hegelian. But he starts from Kant and uses Hegel mainly for the purpose of removing Kant's inconsistencies and defects.³ But Bosanquet is a Hegelian out and out. He is often described as an anglicised Hegel. We have seen, how deeply he is influenced by Hegelian thoughts.⁴ He starts with the Hegelian programme of the concrete universal. But he does not stick to the principle. Here and there he deviates from the true Hegelian ideal. His deviation is perhaps due to the tremendous influence which Bradley exercises on him. Though he does not carry out the Hegelian programme faithfully, still his philosophy is tinged through and through with Hegelianism.

¹ According to Green, nothing can enter into the constitution of our experience which does not bear to it some kind of relation. Experience is constituted by an organised system of relations. Nothing can be conceived which is not constituted by relations. Thus the intelligible is constituted by relations. If we take the relations away, the related system becomes dissolved into a heap of psychic or physical elements.

² See chapter II (*Logic and Reality*).

³ See Haldar's *Neo-Hegelianism*, p. 18.

⁴ See previous chapters.

Green tries to know reality but ends in a theory which has a tinge of agnosticism in it. He writes, "That God is, it entitles us to say with the same certainty as that the world is or that we, ourselves are. What he is, it does not indeed enable us to say in the same way in which we make propositions about matters of fact...." ¹ But Green admits the truth that man seeks to become like God, and "to have the fruition of his Godhead." Here Green anticipates a difficulty. If we do not know fully what God is, how can we seek to become like him? He tries to obviate the difficulty by taking recourse to faith but still his theory smacks of a tinge of agnosticism. According to him, the full nature of God cannot, in a strict sense, be known. In the *Prolegomena to Ethics*, he asks the Kantian question—How experience is possible. He then reaches the conclusion that it consists of related things and as such has for its presupposition a unity of consciousness in which it is centred. Apart from an eternal consciousness, the universe has no meaning. What is the character of this eternal consciousness? Green is rather chary of saying anything positive about the eternal consciousness. He writes, "As to what that consciousness is in itself, or in its completeness, we can only make negative statements. That there is such a consciousness is implied in the existence of the world, but what it is we only know through its so far acting in us as to enable us, however partially and interruptedly, to have knowledge of a world or an intelligent experience." ²

But Bosanquet never ends in agnosticism. His Absolute is knowable. What is ultimately real is through and through spiritual. It is something which exists for thought and is the embodiment of thought. The Absolute

¹ Green, *Works*, Volume III, p. 268.

² *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 54 (2nd Ed.).

is not an unknowable entity, bearing no relation to thought. On the other hand, it itself is thought. Bosanquet holds that thought can know reality. But Green is rather eager to lay stress on the deficiencies of our merely finite thinking. This is why a tinge of agnosticism always clings to his philosophy.

After Green, Bradley enters the arena of philosophical thought. Unlike Green, he does not start from epistemology. While Green builds his idealistic edifice on the foundations of epistemology, Bradley and Bosanquet attack the problems of metaphysics more directly. In his metaphysics, Bradley does not follow any definite method. He closes with Hegel's thought¹ but does not follow his dialectic. Bradley's dialectic is rather subversive. His transition from appearance to reality is forced and arbitrary. The appearances are first condemned as self-contradictory. But suddenly they are reduced to a system in the Absolute. The procedure looks like a piece of miracle. Bosanquet too does not follow the Hegelian dialectic in toto. But he always accepts its truth.

The two absolutistic thinkers, Bosanquet and Bradley, have much in common. But it should be borne in mind that they differ from each other on some subtle points. Hence we think it worth while to devote some space to compare and contrast Bosanquet with Bradley on such important points as (I) Nature of reality, (II) Road to reality, (III) Principle of materiality and (IV) Immortality. Along-side of this, we consider it proper to introduce the views of Śaṅkara, the most pronounced absolutistic thinker of the Indian school, on those points.

¹ "Outside of spirit there is not, and there cannot be, any reality, and, the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real."—*App. and Reality*, p. 552 (1916).

(I)

With Bradley, Bosanquet thinks that reality is a single harmonious system transcending mere relations. Both insist on the spirituality of the real. Both like to comprehend the universe not by fragments but by the whole. But here they differ. Reality, for Bosanquet, is thought, which is always used by him in a comprehensive sense. While reading Bosanquet, this is a point to which we must hold fast. We have seen, ¹ his thought is inclusive of feeling. No rigid distinction can be drawn between feeling and thought. Bradley regards thought as merely analytical and discursive. But Bosanquet finds in it the concrete and synthetic principle. Once for all, Bradley rejects thought. He writes in *Appearance and Reality*. "...Can thought, however complete, be the same as reality, the same altogether, I mean, and with no difference between them? This is a question to which I could never give an affirmative reply." ² Bradley's reality is a single experience. It is "sentience in its widest meaning."

Both agree that the Absolute is the ultimate reality. The Absolute, for Bradley, is the ultimate reality, all else is appearance. But "appearance without reality would be impossible, for what then could appear? And reality without appearance would be nothing, for there certainly is nothing outside appearances. But on the other hand, Reality is not the sum of things. It is the unity in which all things, coming together, are transmuted, in which they are changed all alike, though not changed equally." ³ Somewhat later he observes, "The Absolute, we may say in general, has no assets beyond appearance; and

¹ See Chapter II (*Logic and Reality*).

² *App. and Reality*, p. 554 (Appendix), 1916.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 487-88 (1916).

again, with appearances alone to its credit, the Absolute would be bankrupt. All of these are worthless alike apart from transmutation.”¹

Following Bradley, Bosanquet too thinks that the Absolute is the only reality. Like Bradley he too regards the finite individuals as mere elements. He too regards every particular thing of the universe as mere appearance. The question crops up, is his Absolute something other than the appearances or the elements? Do not the elements make up the Absolute? Baldly stated, the Absolute of Bradley or Bosanquet is constituted of elements. Only we are to remember that they are transformed and rearranged in it.

For Śaṅkara, Brahman is the reality. It is different from the phenomenal, the spatial, the temporal and the sensible. Unlike Bradley's Absolute, Śaṅkara's Brahman does not contain the appearances. “It is not a cause, for that would be to introduce time relations.” Brahman cannot be described. “Its nature is inexpressible, for when we say anything of it we make it into a particular thing.... Every word employed to denote a thing denotes that thing as associated with a certain genus or act or quality or mode of relation. Brahman has no genus, possesses no qualities, does not act and is related to nothing else.”²

Brahman can be described only negatively. “It is *sat* (real), meaning that it is not *asat* (unreal). It is *cit* (consciousness), meaning that it is not *acit* (unconsciousness). It is *ānanda* (bliss), meaning that it is not of the nature of pain (*duhkhasvarūpa*).”³ Brahman is *nirguna* (qualityless). How from such a *nirguna* Brahman does the world-order begin? Here the Indian philosopher says

¹ *App. and Reality*, p. 489 (1918).

² Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 535 (1st Ed.).

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 537.

that Brahman, cast through the moulds of *māyā*, becomes *Īśvara*. *Īśvara* becomes the material cause and *māyā* its instrument of creation. How does *māyā* ensue? Sāṃkara frankly confesses, it is inexplicable. We must remain content with the assertion—Somehow *māyā* is imposed on Brahman. Somehow the world-order begins. This confessed ignorance of the how is often remarked upon. But the philosophy of ‘somehow’ does not throw any discredit on its theorists. If philosophy goes deep, it must needs face incompleteness. ‘Somehow’ is only a symptom of incompleteness.

Is the absolute personal? This question shall engage our attention here. For Hegel, the meaning of the Absolute idea is that reality is a differentiated unity. In it, the unity has no meaning apart from the differentiations and the differentiations have no meaning apart from the unity. The differentiations are the finite selves who are admittedly persons. Their unity, the Absolute is also a person. The unity may be more but cannot certainly be less than a person.

But Dr. McTaggart sounds a discordant note. According to him, “the Absolute is a unity of persons, but it is not a person itself.” The unity of the absolute is spiritual but a spiritual unity need not be a person. He remarks, “It might be said of a college, with as much truth as it has been said of the Absolute, that it is a unity, that it is a unity of spirit, and that none of that spirit exists except as personal. Yet the college is not a person. It is a unity of persons but it is not a person itself.”¹ In the same way the Absolute may not be a person although its differentiations are persons.²

¹ *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 58.

² Dr. McTaggart’s position is hardly tenable. The relation of each finite self to the Absolute is organic. Now if the whole in so far as it is the part, is personal, how can the whole itself be impersonal?

Bradley's answer to this question is this. His Absolute is not personal as a finite being is personal. A person is finite and as such, is distinguished from other persons. In such a way, the Absolute cannot be personal. But Bradley's Absolute is never less than personal. Thus he writes, "The Absolute is not personal, nor is it moral, nor is it beautiful or true. And yet in these denials we may be falling into worse mistakes. For it would be far more incorrect to assert that the Absolute is either false or ugly or bad, or is something even beneath the application of predicates such as these. And it is better to affirm personality than to call the Absolute impersonal. But neither mistake should be necessary. The Absolute stands above and not below its internal distinctions. It does not eject them, but it includes them as elements in its fulness. To speak in other language, it is not the indifference but the concrete identity of all extremes. But it is better to call it superpersonal."¹

Bosanquet too tackles the question in the Bradleian way. He fully sympathises with the assertion of Bradley. "Higher, truer, more beautiful, better and more real, these on the whole, count in the universe as they count for us."² The clue to reality is to be found only in the highest in us. But can we say that Bosanquet's Absolute is true, good or moral in the sense in which a finite is true, good or moral? Evidently not. Bosanquet's Absolute is not personal in the sense in which we are personal. But it should be remembered that his Absolute contains everything in its fulness. It contains the ugly as well as the beautiful, the false as well as the true. And it contains them in a readjusted and reconciled manner. Thus his Absolute contains personality as an element in its fulness. But it is always more than personal and never impersonal.

¹ *App. and Reality*, pp. 472-73 (1930).

² See *Principle*, p. 269.

Śaṅkara views the problem of personality in a novel way. His Absolute or Brahman is the negation of any idea of personality. Personality belongs to *Īśvara* and not to Brahman. *Īśvara* is determinate Brahman. He is the supreme personality. "All the perfections, metaphysical and moral, are ascribed to him (*Īśvara*). He is said to be raised above all evil. He is the immanent spirit.... He is the creator, ruler and destroyer of the universe."¹ Thus we see, Bradley's Absolute is super-personal but Śaṅkara's Brahman is the negation of any idea of personality. *Īśvara* alone fulfills our demands for a personal God.

(II)

So far we have defined the nature of reality. The next question arises—how to know it? Philosophers and religious seers of all ages and climes have tried to show mankind ways to the real. Some have advocated the cause of intellect or thought while others have supported the claims of intuition. In the history of philosophy there was a period when people believed that the real could be known fully and thoroughly by the discursive understanding. But to-day the old order is no more in existence. The reaction from intellectualism is the predominant feature of contemporary philosophy. What is intellectualism? To quote the words of Aliotta, it is "an epistemological system which assigns an autonomous value to the cognitive function." Bergson rejects intellectualism, for its defects are very glaring. "Intellectualism reduces nature and the mind to an inert skeleton.... It sees nothing in things beyond the aspect of repetition; the irreducible and irreversible element in the successive movements of cosmic evolution eludes it. Mechanical

¹ Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 545-46 (1st Ed.).

explanations hold good of the systems which our thought has artificially severed from the continuous flux of the universe; but it cannot be admitted *a priori* that the universe in its totality together with the systems which naturally are found in its image is capable of a mechanical explanation, since in that case time would be useless and devoid of all reality.”¹

Śaṅkara is of opinion that intuition and intuition alone can lead to the real. But his intuition does not fight shy of intellect. Faith and devotion, study and meditation are intended to train us for this integral experience (*anubhava*). It is the noblest blossoming of man's reason. It does not come out of the blue. But a sheer misunderstanding of Śaṅkara's philosophy will ensue if we say that his intuition is only a development of intellect. “Śaṅkara admits the reality of an intuitional consciousness, *anubhava*, where the distinctions of subject and object are superseded and the truth of the supreme self realised. It is the ineffable experience beyond thought and speech, which transforms our whole life and yields the certainty of a divine presence. It is the state of consciousness which is induced when the individual strips himself of all finite conditions, including his intelligence.”² For Śaṅkara intellect is only necessary for the training of mind. It is only preparatory to intuition.

It is Bradley's settled conviction that thought can never do justice to reality. By distinguishing the ‘that’ from the ‘what,’ it is incapable of disclosing the secret of reality.* According to him, when we have any sensation, we have a ‘that’ which is actually present and a ‘what’ by which it is distinguished. In immediate apprehension we are not conscious of the distinction between the two

¹ Alotta, *Idealistic reaction against Science*, pp. 180-131, ff.

² Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 510, 511.

* See reference, Chapter II (note).

aspects. It is a this-what, a process-content. In Judgment we distinguish the two, the predicate and the subject, and attribute the former to the latter. But life or reality is feeling in which the 'that' and the 'what' are inseparable.

But Bosanquet champions the cause of thought. We must remember that his thought is not mere cognition. It is not a separate faculty of something known as the intelligence. It is the active form of totality. It is the life of feeling and essence of free activity.¹ As such Bosanquet's thought is not opposed to intuition. On the other hand, his thought is in part intuitive.

(III)

After the problem of knowing arises the question of materiality. What is the principle of materiality? In Śaṅkara's philosophy the abstract expression of the phenomenality of the world is *māyā*. *Māyā* cannot be different from Brahman which has no second. Again it is not identical with Brahman. "This *māyā* is a feature of the central reality neither identical with nor different from it."² Whatever we may call it, it is necessary to account for the universe and life. Brahman cast into *maya* becomes *Īśvara*. *Māyā* then becomes the energy of *Īśvara* by means of which he creates matter. "It is the creative power of the eternal God and is therefore eternal; and by means of it, the supreme Lord creates the world."³

¹ See *Principle*, p. 59 ff.

Bosanquet does not draw a sharp line between intuition and intellect or thought. His doctrine is just the intimate connection of intuition with intellect. He writes, "Intuition or insight means looking at an object intrinsically systematic and distinct, and discerning its constitutive terms and relations. So far from being illogical, it is the essential feature of the higher form of inference...."

Implication and Linear inference, p. 94.

² *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 570.

³ *Ibid*, p. 572.

What is the principle of materiality in Bosanquet? He cannot satisfactorily explain the advent of matter. We start with the Absolute. Suddenly, somehow, we know not how, matter appears on the scene. Bosanquet does not give us any reason for this sudden appearance of matter. Is there something like the principle of *māyā* in his philosophy? No. He does not favour such a conception. Bradley avoids the problem by calling it inexplicable. He treats materiality as an appearance. And as such it is inexplicable. "The fact of appearance, and of the diversity of its particular spheres, we found was inexplicable. Why there are appearances and why appearances of such various kinds, are questions not to be answered."¹

(IV)

Now comes the time-worn problem of immortality. The popular conception of a future life is that it is a supra-sensuous world, a counterpart of the present world. It is peopled by persons who live eternally. Bosanquet rejects this idea. He is of opinion that the next world is the value world. Among contemporary thinkers, Professor Bosanquet has uniformly adopted a negative attitude towards personal immortality. "The ethical imperative (of Kant) guarantees to us an infinite time in which to work out its behest: the immortality of the individual is bound up with the moral law as a necessary condition of its fulfilment. To this strained and unconvincing argument Prof. Bosanquet effectively opposes the religious experience in which the individual recognising once for all the impotence of his finite striving, surrendering all claims to goodness on his own account, recognises his unity with the Divine goodness by faith and so shares at

¹ *App. and Reality*, p. 453 (1930).

once the perfection which as finite, he could not win by any striving.”¹ Prof. Bosanquet rejects personal immortality, but not all immortality. Immortality, for him, is a thing not given but to be won. According to him, we can satisfactorily hope to attain immortality only when we are good souls. We have come to this world to elicit values from externality. We care for these values and we crave after their eternal preservation in the Absolute. Bosanquet writes, “In general, we know that what we care for in so far as it is really what we care for, is safe through its continuity with the Eternal. In this assurance there is comprised, in principle, all that we long for in the desire for our own survival.”² Thus we see, immortality, for Bosanquet, is the immortality of values and not of persons.

Like Bosanquet, Bradley too adopts a disparaging tone towards the finite individuals as persons. The finite individuals are transmuted in the Absolute. This is their final destiny. According to Bradley, separate existence of the finite beings is a defect. “The plurality of souls in the Absolute,” says he, “is appearance and their existence is not genuine.”³ “Taken together in the whole, appearances as such cease.”⁴ Then comes his crowning remark. “In the Absolute” (to quote him) “the individual attains the complete gift and dissipation of his personality” in which “he as such, must vanish.”⁵

Saṃkara adopts a rather different view. According to the Indian philosopher, only the knower of truth attains eternal life. Finite beings are Brahman when it is enveloped in *māyā*. The moment *māyā* is gone, there is no distinction

¹ Pringle Pattison, *Idea of Immortality*, p. 153.

² *Value*, p. 261.

³ *App. and Reality*, p. 270 (1930).

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 511 (1916).

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 419 *passim* (1916).

between the knower and the known, the finite and the Infinite. In eternal life the finite becomes the infinite. But eternal life is to be differentiated from mere survival. Saṃkara is serious on the point. Until eternal life is gained our lives are bound up with the wheel of endless becoming (*Samsāra*). Survival comes to the lot of all finite souls who are guaranteed future existence in the endless circuit. But true immortality or oneness with the Absolute comes to the lot of those souls who have attained the truth by means of spiritual insight.

So far about comparison and contrast. We shall now bring our study to an end. We shall conclude by pointing out the legacies of Bosanquet to future thought.

Bosanquet teaches nothing new. All his thoughts can be traced to Hegel, Green, Bradley and other thinkers of the Hegelian school. But all through his writings he expresses the reasonable faith of open-minded men. Like so many other idealists of the Neo-Hegelian school, Bosanquet has no faith in a philosophy that has no concern with the affairs of practical life. Philosophy must prove its effectiveness as a practical creed. This is also his legacy to all subsequent idealistic thought.

He preaches absolute idealism.¹ Idealism is an ambiguous word with a variety of meanings. Professor Sorley distinguishes two kinds of idealism. "The first kind of idealism consists in assigning an existential character to truth and in regarding objects of intellectual apprehension as constituting a realm of existence over against which the world of concrete facts stands in inexplicable opposition." (Platonic Idealism.) The second type consists in the assertion that reality is spiritual, that all existence has its centre and being in mind. (Modern idealism.) What is Bradleian idealism? The finite selves are not

¹ Bosanquet prefers to call his philosophy, "Speculative Philosophy."

ultimately real but the reality is the whole which contains the selves as elements. The nature of the real is experience. Bosanquet's idealism teaches that the Absolute is the only reality. It is individuality. But we come across a peculiar hint in his idealism. His philosophical mission is to find out the idea, the meaning of the world-process. This is why he is so eager to find out the values, arrived at by the finite individuals. He regards idealism as a doctrine which seeks the idea or meaning of the cosmic reality. In his opinion, values alone can partially unfold the infinite mysteries of the universe.

Another gift to modern thought is his emphasis on "concrete thinking." To separate things from each other and from the whole is the inveterate habit of the unreflecting mind. But Bosanquet shows that reality is a single coherent and all-inclusive system. Isolated, self-sufficient objects are nothing but false abstractions. A thing has being only as an integral factor of this system.

What is Bosanquet's attitude towards all the diverse movements in contemporary thought? We answer, it is one of general welcome. He is eager to incorporate the truths of neo-idealism and neo-realism into his own philosophy. With much of what is called realism, Bosanquet finds himself in sympathy, especially in so far as realists too proceed on the true axiom of knowledge, *viz.* that we can know things as they really are. Also he writes, "The neo-realist, the man of comparative science, and the empiricist, are everywhere at work to-day....building the foundations of that speculative philosophy whose super-structure already exists. Of course, in doing so, they immensely enrich and effectively amend it." ¹

One word more and we finish. History will remember Bosanquet for his spiritual outlook. He says that the

¹ *Meeting of Extremes*, p. 75.

troubles of life are due to our loss of hold on its spiritual foundation. Our present age is an age of immense material progress. Science has brought all material comforts within the easy reach of all. Still we are unhappy. Why? The reason is that we rely on our own strength and forget the call of the Infinite. Bosanquet asks us not to forget the Eternal. He sings to every heart the song of the Absolute. And as a true seer, he endeavours to quicken in every heart the feeling of 'at-homeness in the Whole.' Herein lies the beauty of his philosophical thinking.

Place-Names of Bengal

BY

KRISHNAPADA GOSWAMI, M.A.

CHAPTER I

OLD PLACE-NAMES FROM INSCRIPTIONS

The earliest available sources of place-names in Bengal are the inscriptions of the Gupta, Pāla, Varman and Sena kings found in Bengal and Assam. Not a few names are to be found in early works written in Bengal. [See S. K. Chatterji, *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language*, pp. 179 ff.]

[1] Dhānāidaha Copper-plate Grant of Kumāra-Gupta. North-Central Bengal, c. 432-433 A.C. (R. G. Basāk, *Sāhitya, Pauṣa and Caitra*, 1323) “Kṣudraka”-village; “Khādāpāra” or “Khāṭāpāra”, a Viṣaya or district (*cf.* new Bengali word “Khārī” খাড়ী, channel [Khāṭā = Khādā]). The name “Khārī” খাড়ী is found in the Tarpaṇḍīghī Grant of Lakṣmaṇasena (see 34). In the Barrackpur Grant of Vijaya-Sena, there is a reference of a “Khāḍi-Viṣaya”, which was a “maṇḍala”, now in the south of 24-Parganas. We find the word “Khāṭikā” in the Khālimpur Grant of Dharmapāla (*cf.* the modern village name “Kharikā” খড়িকা in Midnapur district).

[2] Five Dāmodarpur Copper-plates of the Gupta Period, North-Central Bengal. (R. G. Basāk, *Epigraphia Indica*, XV, No. 7, pp. 133 ff.)

(i) 443-444 A.C. village *Doṅgā*. The word occurs as “*dāṅgā*” ডাঙ্গা high-land, high, in modern Bengal place-names. The words “*dāṅgī*” ডাঙ্গী, “*dāṅgar*” ডাঙ্গর, “*dāṅgarī*” ডাঙ্গরী, “*dāṅguri*” ডাঙ্গুরী and “*dāiṅg*” ডাইঙ্গ are also found in the place-names of Bengal. These words are derivatives from the word “*dāṅgā*” ডাঙ্গা which is a Deśī word. Cf. Assamese “*dāṅgariyā*” high one.

(ii) *ṭaṅ* টং—high-land. (cf. Bengali *ṭeṅgrā* টেঙ্গরা upland, the name of a village). The word *ṭeṅgā* টেঙ্গা also occurs in *Gridāṭeṅgā* গ্রিডান টেঙ্গা, *Jaṅgalṭeṅgā* জঙ্গল টেঙ্গা, the names of villages in the district of Mymensingh.

(iii) 476-495 A.C. Village *Palāśa-Vṛndaka*. The word *Vṛndaka* = modern Bengali *bādā* বাদা or *vana* বন. Villages *Caṇḍa-grāma*, *Vāyi-grāma*.

(iv) [Cf. *Vāpikā-grāma* in the Tipperah Inscription of Lokanātha (see 7) and *Rolla-vāyikā* in the Ashrafpur Grant of Deva-khadga].

(v) 533-534 A.C. Village *Svacchanda-Pāṭaka*. *Pāṭaka* = modern Bengali *Pārā* পাড়া, neighbourhood, quarter, which occurs largely in the place-names of Bengal.

Village “*Lavaṅga-sikā*” (cf. modern place-name *Noāsī* নোয়াসী in Mymensingh).

Village *Sātu-vanāśramaka* (cf. also the village name *vanāśrama* বনাশ্রম in Mymensingh); village *Paraspatikā*; village *Purāṇa-vṛndikā-hari* [cf. *vṛndaka* above in (iii); *Hari* < *gharia* < *grhika*. “A house by the side of the old forest” (?)]

[3] *Pāhārpur* Copper-plate Grant of the [Gupta] year 159. North-Central Bengal. 479 A.C. (K. N. Dikṣhit, EP. IND., Vol. XX, No. 5, pp. 159 ff.) Village *Baṭa-gohālī* = modern Bengali *Baṭa-goāl* (cf. *Ghar-goāl* ঘর গোয়াল in Hughli and *Goāl-potā* গোয়াল-পোতা in Khulna and Burdwan. Village *Prṣṭhima-pottaka* = modern Bengali *Piṭhi-potā* (?).

Village *Ghoṣāṭa-puñjaka* (cf. the name “*Ghāsiyārā*” ঘাসিয়াড়া, a village in Mahādebpur police-station, district

Rajshahi); village Nitva-gohālī; village Palaśaṭṭa = modern Bengali Palśāt (?).

[4] Three Copper-plate Grants from East Bengal, 6th century A.C. (F. E. Pargiter, I. Ant., July, 1910.)

(i) Village Hima-Sena-Pāṭaka (= modern Bengali Pārā পাড়া, quarter or village occurring in the place-names of Bengal).

Village Trighaṭṭikā (= modern Bengali Teghāṭī তেঘাটী)

Village Sīla-Kuṇḍa, Rock-hill. Place-names with the endings Kuṇḍa are found everywhere in Bengal. The word Kuṇḍa is probably connected with Telugu “Koṇḍa” hill, rock, as suggested by Prof. S. K. Chatterji in his ODBL., pp. 66-67 (cf. Kuṇra কুড় heap, mass, dunghill, which also occurs largely in the place-names of Bengal). A village Sīl-Kuṇḍa শিলকুড়িয়া is found in the district of Mymensingh.

(ii) Village Navyavakāśikā = Navya + avakāśikā, new channel for passage of water. [See ODBL., p. 180.]

(iii) Village Dhru-vilā-ṭi = Dhruva-bila-vāṭi-vāḍi, where bila-vāḍi = house or village by the marsh [cf. Dharāṭi ধরাটী, a village in Dacca].

[5] Mallā-sārul Copper-plate Inscription of Gopa [-candra] and Vijayasena. West Bengal, 6th century A.C. [N. G. Mazumdar, VSPdP., 1344 B.S., Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 17-21; S. Sen, Calcutta Review, 1938 A.C., March, pp. 363-65.]

The following villages are found in the inscriptions—

Bakkattaka = Present-day Bāktā বাক্তা

Godhagrāma = Present-day Gohagrāma or Gogāñ গোহগ্রাম, গোগাঁ

Khaddajotika (Khaṇḍajotikeya) = Present-day Khāñṛjuli খাঁড়-জুলি

Arddhakaraka = Present-day Ādrā আদ্রা

Kapisthavāṭaka = Present-day Kaitārā কৈতাড়া near Ādrā.

Madhuvāṭaka = modern Maharā or Maorā, মহড়া, মওড়া

Vaīavallaka = modern Bāblā বাবলা

Koḍḍavīra (cf. modern Bengali Kaṛorī কড়োরা)

Vindhya-purā (Vindhya-pureya)

Sālmalivāṭaka

Vetragarttā; Āmragarttikā (village name?).

[6] Inscription of the time of Jaya-nāgā of Karna-suvarṇa, Central Bengal, 6th-7th century. (L. D. Barnett, EP. IND., Vol. XVIII, No. 7, pp. 60 ff.)

Audumbara. Viṣaya or district.

Village Kutkuṭa (Sanskritised from Kukkuḍa?); cf. villages Kukuramuṛi কুকুড়মুড়ী, Kukurāmuṛi কুকুড়ামুড়ী in Midnapur district.

Village Amata-pāutikagrāma.

Vappa-Ghoṣa-vāṭa, where Ghōṣa-vāṭa would give a modern Bengali form Ghōṣārā ঘোষাড়া (cf. Goās <Gopavāsa গোয়াস <গোপবাস in Nadia and Murshidabad district, Goarī <Gopavāṭikā গোয়ারী <গোপবাটিকা a suburb of Kṛṣṇanagar, and Goārā <Gopavāṭa গোয়াড়া <গোপবাট in Faridpur.

Village Vakhata-sumālikā, where Vakhata is the source of the new Bengali form Baharā or Bayrā বহড়া বয়ড়া (cf. Jota Baharā জোত বহড়া, a village in Nadia; Baharā, Baheṛā বহড়া বহেড়া, in Khulna; বহড়াগুড়া Baharagura in Midnapur; and Bayrā বয়ড়া in Jessore and Rajshahi districts).

Gāṅginikā, river, probably modern Jalāṅgī, a branch of the Ganges or Padmā, which unites with Bhāgīrathī near Nadiyā.

[7] Tipperah grant of Loka-nātha : 7th century. (R. G. Basāk. EP. IND., Vol. XV, No. 18, pp. 301 ff., Sāhitya, Kārttika, 1321.)

District (Viṣaya) of Suvvuṅga. “Kaṇā-moṭikā” hill (= modern Bengali Kānāmuṛi কানামুড়ী, dry ditch. Cf. Khānāmuṛi খানামুড়ী a village (Midnapur). Muṛi মুড়ি also occurs in place-names as Nāṭmuṛi নাটমুড়ি (Chittagong), Baṛimuṛi বড়িমুড়ি (Tipperrah).

Villages Paṅga and Vāpikā. (cf. Pāṅgsā পাংশা, a village in Faridpur district < paṅgavāsaka, abode of Paṅga.

Village Tāmra-pathara-khaṇḍa = copper-stone district. (See ODBL. p. 180.)

[8] Nidhanpur Copper-plates of Bhāskara-varman of Kāmarūpa; Central Bengal, 7th century.

[Padmanātha Bhaṭṭācāryya, Kāmarūpa-śāsanāvalī, pp. 1-43; EP. IND., Vol. XII, No. 13, pp. 65 ff. Rangpur Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā, 1319, No 4; Vijayā, Āṣārha; Rādhā Govinda Basāk, Dacca Review, June, 1913; Amarnath Roy, Indian Culture, Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 698. "Gāṅginikā"—River Gāṅginī গাঙ্গিনী probably modern Jalaṅgī, a branch of the Ganges (found also in 6.)]

Jaṭalī tree (*cf.* modern Bengali Jārula জারুল). *Cf.* villages Jārulapāla জারুলপাল and Jarula জরুল in Midnapur and Burdwan districts respectively.

[9] Khālimpur Grant of Dharmapāla; North-Central Bengal, 1st quarter of the 9th century. (Akṣayakumar Maitra, Gauḍa-lekha-mālā; R. D. Banerji, The Pālas of Bengal, ASB., Memoirs, V, No. 3.)

The territory (maṇḍala) of Vyāghra-taṭī (= modern Bengali Bāgaṛī বাগড়ী a village in Barisal).

The district of Mahantā-prakāśa (*cf.* Mahatā মহতা, a village in Murshidabad).

Villages Krauñca-Śvabhra; Pālitaka (*cf.* Paltā পলতা, a village in 24-Parganas).

Mādhāsāmmali (*cf.* Sālmalivāṭaka in [5])

The territory of "Āmra-ṣaṇḍikā," mango-grove.

The district (viṣaya) of Sthālikkaṭa.

The village of Go-pippalī (*cf.* place-names Pipaliā পিপলিয়া in Howrah and Pipuliā পিপুলিয়া in Dacca); "Uḍra-grāma"; "Puṇārāma-vilvaṅgardha," a stream; village Nala-carmmaṭa; cammaḍa > cāmṛā = modern Bengali cāmṛā চামড়া; Villages Nāmuṇḍikā hesadummika; Vedaśavilvikā. Rohita-Vāḍī (= modern Bengali Ru(h)ibārī রুহিবাড়ী or রুইবাড়ী carp-fish town) (see ODBL., p. 81) (*cf.* also the place-name Ruhi-gārī রুহিগাড়ী in Rajshahi district).

Piṇḍāra-viṭī-joṭikā (*cf.* Khaḍḍa joṭikā in [5]).

Joṭika = modern Bengali jolī জোলী or juri জুড়ি as found in

the place-names Khāñṛjolī খাঁড়জোলা (Burdwan), Soṇājolī সোণাজোলা (Birbhum), Bālijurī বালিজুড়ী (Mymensingh), Domjurī ডোমজুড়ী (Barisal), etc.

Viṭi occurs as Bhiṭi ভিটি or Bhiṭā ভিটা in modern place-names of Bengal.

The name Piṇḍāra-viṭi-joṭikā would therefore mean the channel by the house of the Piṇḍāra tree.

Uktāra-yoṭa, where Joṭa = modern Bengali জোল found in the place-names Puṭijola পুটীজোল (Murshidabad), Soṇājola সোণাজোল (Hughli).

Viṭi-Dharmāyo-joṭikā = the channel by the house or temple of Dharma (?).

Kāṇā-dvipikā (*cf.* Kaṇā-moṭikā in [7]), blind or edge isle. (See ODBL., p. 81). River Koṇṭhiyā.

Jenandāyikā; Vesānikā-Khāṭikā (where Khāṭika = modern Bengali Khārī খাড়ী, creek).

Haṭṭikā (= modern Bengali hāṭī হাটী, found in the modern place-names of Bengal).

Tala-pāṭaka [where pāṭaka = modern Bengali pāṛā পাড়া *i.e.*, village quarters found also in Svacchanda-pāṭaka in 2 (v)]. *Cf.* modern village-name Telārā তেলাড়া < *Tailapāṭaka or Tailāḍhaka (Burdwan); Telkupī তেলকুপী (Manbhum).

[10] Tezpur (Assam) Rock Inscription of Harjara-Varmā on the Brahmaputra, 1st half of the 9th century. (H. P. Śāstrī, JBORS., 1917, Part IV, pp. 508 ff.; Nagendranāth Vasu, Social History of Assam, Vol. I, pp. 159a, 159b; Padmanātha Bhaṭṭācāryya, Kāmarūpa-śāsanāvalī, pp. 185-92).

Village Hārupapesvara-pura.

Nākka-josī (*cf.* Nokka, Nekka in [28]; also Noāsī নোয়াসী a village in Mymensingh).

Avara-parvata. Abor Hills

[11] Ashrafpur Grants of Deva-Khaḍga; East Bengal, 1st half of the 10th century. (G. M. Laskar, Memoirs of the ASB., I, No. 6, pp. 86 ff.; R. D. Banerji, *op. cit.*, p. 67.)

Village Tala pāṭaka (found also in [9]).

Village Dara-pāṭaka.

Datta-Kaṭaka (*cf.* place-names ending in Kaṛā or Karā as Vanakarā বনকরা, Bijayakarā বিজয়করা in Tipperah district).

Markaṭāśī-pāṭaka (= Markaṭavāsika pāṭaka, monkey-home-village). [See ODBL., p. 182.]

Nava-ropya; Paranāṭana; Dvārodaka.

Vvāra-mugguka; Cāta; Jaya-Karmānta-vāsaka.

Talyodyānikara-taralā. Kodara-coraka

Palaśata (*cf.* Palaśaṭṭa in [3])

Śiva-hradikā-sogga-vargga

Śrīmeta; Para-nāṭana-nāda-varmmi.

Ugra-voraka, where voraka = modern Bengali Vola, Pola field, as found in the place-names Benāpola বেনাপোল (Jessore), Gilāpola গিলাপোল (24-Parganas).

Tisanāda-jayadatta-kataka (?).

[12] Tejpur Copper-plate of Banamāla; middle of the 9th century. North-Central Bengal. (Kāmarūpa-śāsanāvalī by Padmanātha Bhaṭṭācāryya, pp. 54 ff.)

Trisrotā river (= present-day Tistā)

Abhisura-bāṭaka.

Daśa Lāṅgala; Candrapuri; Abāri.

Naukubāsula (*cf.* Naudābāsa নওদাবাস, a village in Howrah district).

[13] Nowgong Copper-plate of Bala-varman of Prāgjyotiṣa c. 975 A.C. [Padmanātha Bhaṭṭācāryya, Kāmarūpa-śāsanāvalī, pp. 71 ff.; A. R. Hoernle, JASB., 1897, pp. 285 ff.].

The word Koppam = Bengali Kopa কোপ slash, dig [*cf.* also Kopā, Kopī কোপা, কোপী, found in the place-names as Sol-kopā শোলকোপা, Kalākopā কলাকোপা (in Faridpur), Dākopā দাকোপা (in Khulna), Maṇḍalakupī মণ্ডলকুপী (in Midnapur)].

[14] Bāṅgarḥ Grant of Mahīpāla; end of the 10th century. (R. D. Banerji, *op. cit.*, p. 76; Gauḍa-lekha-mālā.) Gokalikā-maṇḍala.

Villages Cūṭā-pallikā, Karaṭa-pallikā, Hasti-pada.

Village Cavaṭi (= modern Bengali Caṭi চটি, inn). Cf. the village-name Caṭī চড়ী in Mymensingh.

[15] Bālāditya Inscription of the time of Mahīpāla; 11th century. (“Gauḍa-lekha-mālā.”) Village Tailāḍhaka (= modern Bengali Telārā তেলাড়া)

[16] Edilpur Copper-plate of Śrī-candra-deva; 10th-11th century A.C. (N. K. Bhaṭṭasālī, EP. IND., Vol. XVIII, No. 12, pp. 183 ff.; N. G. Mazumdar, Inscriptions of Bengal, III, pp. 166 ff.)

Village Leliyā in Kumāratālakā maṇḍala (sub-division).

Sataṭa-padmā-vāṭi district (or viṣaya) “a house on the bank of Padmā.”

[17] Rāmpāl Grant of Śrī-candra-deva; 1st half of the 11th century. (R. G. Basāk, EP. IND., XIII, pp. 136 ff.; N. G. Mazumdar, Inscriptions of Bengal, III, pp. 1-9) Nānya-maṇḍala, viṣaya or district. Village Neha-Kāṣṭhi (= Sneha Kāṣṭhikā). Cf. the affix Kāṭhi or Kāṭhī কাঠি, কাঠি, which is found largely in the place-names of South-West Vaṅga. (See ODBL., p. 183.)

[18] Dhullā Copper-plate of Śrī-candra-deva. East Bengal. Unpublished. (N. G. Mazumdar, Inscriptions of Bengal, III, pp. 165 ff.) Village Dūrvvā-pattra in Vallimuṇḍā maṇḍala (cf. Balliśurā) in Khedira-vallī-viṣaya খেদির-বল্লী-বিষয় where Khediravallī=(?) modern Khallī খল্লী; Loṇiyājodā prastara; Tivaravillī (= modern Tillī তিল্লী); village Parkaḍīmuṇḍā in Yolā maṇḍala in Ikkadāsī viṣaya (where Ikkadāsī=present-day Ekāśī একাশী). Village Mūlapatrā.

[19] Sylhet Bhāṭerā Copper-plate Inscription of Govinda-Kesava-Deva; 11th century (c. 1049 A.C.) (K. M. Gupta, EP. IND., Vol. XIX, No. 49, pp. 277 ff.; M. M. Padmanātha Vidyāvinoda, VSPdP., 1328, pp. 175 ff.; Proceedings of the ASB., 1880, pp. 141 ff.) [In this plate, we get quite a long list of names of villages and rivers, which have still retained their original form, though some of them have undergone slight

alteration.] Haṭṭa-pāṭaka would give a modern Bengali form haṭpārā “a village where a market is held” (*cf.* the village named Hāṭpārābhūm হাটপাড়ভূম in Mymensingh). Baḍagāma = modern Baḍagāñ near Bhāṭerā. Mahurāpur is modern Maurāpur. Haḍhī-thāna (thāna = sthāna). Degigāna. Varapañcāla = modern Baram-cāl or Brahma-cāl. Śiddhava; Amanāṭa; Guḍāvayīka (= present-day Guḍābhāi). Kāṭā-bācha (*cf.* Kāṭā-Khāla, the name of a Railway Station in Assam Bengal Railway; there is also a river of this name in Kāchār). Yithāyi-nagara. Yoḍāti thārka (*cf.* joṛā যোড়া, pair). Vālūsīgāma (= present-day Bāūsīgāma; *cf.* also Bāūsī বাউসী a village in Mymensingh). Nava-chādī (*cf.* modern Noāhāṭī). Kaḍḍiyā (Kaḍḍiyā) = (?) modern Kaḍāiyā. Savagā-nāyi (= River Savagā). Kāniyānī or Kāliyāyānī. Dr. K. M. Gupta says that it is the modern Kālāin river near Kānihāṭī on the border of Hill Tipperah. Yegamyagaṇiyā. Thava-sonti (= ? river). Prof. S. K. Chatterji suggests that the word is Sthāpa-srotas + ikā = modern Bengali √tho + sōta < Sonta (old Bengali) < MIA Sonta < OIA Srotas, “arrested stream” [see ODBL., p. 183].

Bhāskara-ṭeṅkari, probably Bhāskara hill. There is also a village named Bhāskara or Bhāskara-ṭeṅgarī in Teṅgrā moujā [*cf.* village-names ending in ṭikri টিক্রি and ṭeṅgā টেঙ্গা as found in Kulṭikri কুলটিক্রি (Midnapur), Kāpāsaṭikri কাপাসটিক্রি (Bogra), Nāmṭikri নামটিক্রি (Maldah), Jaṅgalṭeṅgā জঙ্গলটেঙ্গা, and Gridān-ṭeṅgā গ্রিদানটেঙ্গা (in Mymensingh)]. Nāṭayāna; Anī-Kāthī, Āḍāna-Kāthī (where Kāthī = modern Kāṭhī কাঠী which occurs abundantly in the modern place-names of deltaic Bengal). [In this connection, it is to be noted that there was a confusion between the dental and cerebral sounds in Assamese as early as the 9th-10th century and the old speech of Sylhet also shared in this habit. We find a word Pravista (with dental st) for Praviṣṭa in the Tezpur Rock Inscription of Harjara Varmā. (See ODBL., p. 182.) Bhogāḍatta (personal name ?); Bobāchaḍā (probably the streamlet near Bhāṭerā); Sāta-kopā (= ? seven springs, *cf.* village-names containing kopā as their second parts in

Central and West Bengal, *e.g.*, Sālkopā শালকোপা (Jessore), Tailakopā তৈলকোপা (Hughli). Naḍa-kuṭi-gāma (= ? Nalakuṭi-grāma, reed huts in a village); Haḍi-gāṅga (*cf.* modern Bengali Gāṅg গাঙ্গ stream); Dhana-kuṇḍo-dī (*cf.* Dhāmāyi or Dhāmā-nadi); Bhāṭa-paḍā (*cf.* village-name Bhāṭ-pārā ভাটপাড়া in 24-Parganas); Chaḍhā-thānā; Haḍḍipa-gr̥ha. Piāpi-nagara; Sibhāḍava-grāma (*cf.* Sibhārā শিহার, a village in Mymensingh, and Burdwan). Sāgara [*cf.* village-names Matisāgara মতিসাগর (Faridpur) and Dhānasāgara ধানসাগর (Khulna)].

Pochāniyā is probably the modern village Pohāniyā. Salā Chāpadā (= ? present-day Sālchāprā, a Railway Station in A. B. Ry.) Parākoṇā (= ? modern Barakonā); Akhālikula (= present-day Ākhāilkula). Besides, villages Sughara, Varuṇī; Saramā = probably modern Surma river (?) on which Sylhet is situated. Kararagāma = (?) modern Karer grāma.

[20] Gauhāṭī Copper-plate of Indra-pāla of Prāgiyotiṣa, *c.* 1050 A.C. (A. R. Hoernle, JASB., 1897, pp. 113 ff.; Padmanātha Bhaṭṭācāryya, Kāmarūpa-śāsanāvalī" pp. 116 ff.) Hapyoma viṣaya or district. Mākkhiyāna-villa (= bil, marsh), *cf.* Māchiyārā মাছিয়াড়া (a village in Khulna). Kuntavita-Khambhavā (where Khambhavā = modern Bengali Khāmbā < Stambha, pillar); Makuti-Mākkhiyāna-hasī; Kuntavita-lākkhyavā. Village Kāśī-pāṭaka; Svalpadyat, where Svalpa occurs as common initial element in place-names as Svalpa-bāhirdiyā স্বল্পবাহিরদিয়া (Khulna); Digumma.

[21] Guākuci Inscription of Indra-pāla-deva of Kāmarūpa; 11th century. [Padmanātha Bhaṭṭācāryya, Kāmarūpa-śāsanāvalī, pp. 130 ff.] Mandi viṣaya or district. Paṇḍarī (= ? modern Paṇḍurī). Village Vaināmaka in Sābathi. Markamyikokka; Rājaputrapāṭaka; Makuti. Haharabijola (*cf.* modern place-names with endings Jol জোল, channel).

[22] Silimpur Inscription of Jaya-pāla of Kāmarūpa; 11th century. (R. G. Basāk, EP. IND., XIII, pp. 283 ff.) Villages Bālagrāma; Śirīṣa-puñja (*cf.* Ākrā puñjī আকড়া পুঞ্জী, a village in 24-Parganas); Kuṭumba-pallī; Tarkārī; Siyambaka.

Sakaṭi (*cf.* modern place-name *Sākaṭi* শাকটী in Midnapur).
Vaicunda, tank.

[23] Bhuvaneshwar Inscription of Bhaṭṭa Bhava-deva. (James Prinsep and G. T. Marshall, JASB., Vol. VI, pp. 88-97 ; Rājendra Lāla Mitra, Antiquities of Orissa, Vol. II, pp. 85-87 ; F. Kielhorn, EP. IND., Vol. VI, pp. 203ff. N. G. Mazumdar, Inscriptions of Bengal, III, pp. 25-41). Villages Hastinībhiṭṭa (where bhiṭṭa occurs as bhiṭi or bhiṭā ভিটি, ভিটা in modern place-names), Siddhala and Vandyā-ghaṭi in Rāḍha or West Bengal.

[24] Belābo Grant of Bhoja-Varma-deva : East Bengal, 11th century (Dacca Review, Vol. II, No. 4, July, 1912 R. D. Banerji, JASB., N.S., Vol. X, 1914, pp. 121 ff. R. G. Basāk, Sāhitya, 1319 B.S , pp. 382-99 and also in EP. IND., XII, pp. 37ff. N. G. Mazumdar, Inscriptions of Bengal, III, pp. 14ff.).

“Adhaḥ-pattana-maṇḍala” (where pattana is the name of a village in Tipperah ; *cf.* the place-name Ādhpāsā আধপাশা in Dacca).

Kauśāmbī-aṣṭagaccha (Aṣṭagaccha = Present-day Āṭgāchā আটগাছা ‘eight trees’); village Upyalikā.

[25] Kamauli Grant of Vaidya-deva of Assam ; latter part of the 11th century. [A. Venis, EP. IND., II, pp. 348, Gauḍa-lekha-mālā.]

Haṁsā Koñcī (= Haṁsa + Krauñca. *Cf.* Krauñca-Śvabhra in 9) Vaḍā, Vāḍā-Viṣaya. Villages Sānti, Santi-vaḍā (*cf.* modern place-name Sāñtrā সাঁতড়া). Village Mandara (= ? Māndāra, a tree), Kaṁsa-pala (the latter = pola পোল which is found as common final element in the modern place-names of Bengal).

Dig(h)-dāṇḍi-dharā (where Dig(h) = dīrgha, long ; Dig(h) may also be connected with Persian diḥ found as ḍiḥi, ḍi ডিহি, ডি in modern Bengal place-names). *Cf.* the village name Dāṇḍharā ডান্দধর ‘holding of a stick’ in Mymensingh. (See ODBL., p. 184.)

Village Sīngiā (= Śṛngikā)-dhara. *Cf.* Sīngiā শিঙ্গিয়া a village in Jessore.

Loṅga-Vaḍā (*cf.* the village name Lenṛā লেংড়া in Rajshahi).

Koṇṭu-Vāḍa, Koṇṭo-hāḍa (*cf.* Kāṭrā কাটড়া, a village in Mymensingh).

Navadharā (*cf.* modern Bengali nadhara <navadhara—youthful, graceful). Dharā ধরা is also found as common final element in place-names.

Village Sira-vaḍā [*cf.* villages Siyārā শিয়াড়া (Midnapur and Murshidabad) and Siorā শিওড়া (Birbhum)].

Sila-guḍi (*cf.* Siligūḍi শিলিগুড়ি)

Jaya-rāti-pola ; Unai-pola (*cf.* modern Bengal Unai উনই—spring, well)=spring field. (See ODBL., p. 185.)

Pipā-muṇḍā. [Muṇḍā মুণ্ডা is also found in modern place-names such as Bikalmuṇḍā বিকলমুণ্ডা (Midnapur), Muṇḍamālā মুণ্ডমালা (Rajshahi).]

Ajhaḍā-Cau-bola = treeless four fields.

Vuḍhi-pokhiri = “pond of the old woman.”

Kulā-Cāpaḍi (*cf.* modern Cāprī চাপড়ী, a village in Jessore).

Nai-pośṛṅgārayo (where Nai = nadī).

Lacchu-Vaḍā (Beng. Lācha লাহ < MIA. laccha < Skt. rathyā—street). (See ODBL., p. 185.)

Village Ghāṭa-Campaka

Velāvanīpaṭā-nava-pala

Dhravolaya, a village. *Cf.* a village Dollā দোলা in Mymensingh.

Helāvanā-muṇḍa = head of the Helā wood.

River Naḍa-jolī “flowing stream.”

[26] Manahali Grant of Madanapāla-deva ; c. 1108. North-Central Bengal [Gauḍa-lekha-māla ; N. N. Vasu, JASB. 1900, I, pp. 66 ff ; R. D. Banerji, *op. cit.*, p. 104.]

Halāvartta Maṇḍala ; village Kāṣṭhā-giri ; village Campā-hiṭṭhī (=modern Bengali Campaṭī চম্পাটী. *Cf.* also the village name Cāmpāṭī চাম্পাটী in 24-Parganas).

[27] Inscription of Īśvara-ghoṣa of Dhekkarī: Wes

Bengal, 12th century. (A. K. Maitra, *Sāhitya, Vaiśākha and Jyaiṣṭha*, 1320 ; R. D. Banerji, *Bāṅgālār Itihās*, Vol. I, pp. 301-302 ; N. G. Mazumdar 'Inscriptions of Bengal', III, pp. 149ff.)

Dhekkarī (= modern Bengali Dhekur ঢেকুর). [*Cf.* Dheṅgarī ডেঙ্গরী, a village in Mymensingh. There is also a village Dhukuriyā ঢুকুরিয়া in Rāṇisankail police station, Dinajpur district.]

Piyolla Maṇḍala. *Cf.* Pāllā পালা, a village in Dacca. Gāllītipyaka Viṣaya. *Cf.* Gollā গোলা, a village in Dacca.

Digghāsodīyā (yā = ka) [= dīrgha + āvasa + dvīpaka]. Chandavāra. *Cf.* Cāṇḍrā চান্দড়া and Chāṇḍrā ছান্দড়া, two villages in Jessore.

[28] Puṣṭabhadrā Inscription of Dharmapāla of Prāgyoṭiṣa ; 12th century. [Padmanātha Bhaṭṭācāryya, *Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī*, pp. 168 ff.; also Rangpur *Sāhitya Pariṣad Patrikā*, X, No. 2, 1322 San.] Village Khyāti-puni [Puni পুনি is found in modern place-names, as Bāuripuni বাউরিপুনি (in Murshidabad), Corpuni চোরপুনি (in Burdwan)].

Village Digḍola. [Ḍola is also found in modern place names, as Āṇḍola আন্ডোল (Birbhum).]

Pūraji, viṣaya or district.

Nokka (Nekkā) ḍevvarī-pāla, where pāla occurs in modern place-names as Dāmpāla দামপাল (Burdwan), Cuyāpāla চুয়াপাল (Midnapur).

Govābha-bhoga-ali(pa)ṇā. Bhoga also occurs in modern village-names.

Village Khaggāli [*cf.* modern Bengali Khāgrā খাগড়া (< Khagga < Khaḍga) + ali, reed-bank]. River Camyala-joli (Camyala > Cammaḍa = new Bengali Cāmṛā চামড়া) = ? skin stream.

Sovvaḍī সোব্বড়ী "tank" ; Jau-galla, river. (where, Jaū < jatu + galla ; *cf.* New Bengali √gal গল, to melt) = molten lac. River, Nekkādeulī (*cf.* new Bengali Deul < devakula, temple (see OUBL., p. 185). Deul দেউল is also a village in Faridpur) Singarijoli, river. (*Cf.* Singrā সিংড়া, also Siñjoli সিংজোলা, two

villages in Jessore.) Dijjavatiharī (?). (*Cf.* modern Bengali hārī হাড়ী <haddika.)

River Bekkaśuṣkā. Avañci ; Thaīsāḍobbhi (? tree). (*Cf.* eww Bengali ḍobā ডোবা, puddle.)

Cakkojāṇa (? tree) [Jāna জান occurs as common final element in modern place-names of Bengal ; *e.g.* , Goālajāna গোয়াল-জান (Murshidabad), Sātjāna সাতজান (Hughli)].

Pāralimuṇḍā [=Pārul(i) পারুল tree. Skt. Pāṭali পাটলি, and muṇḍā = muṛā মুড়া] “the foot of the pārula tree.” Muṇḍā মুণ্ডা is found in village-names as referred in [25]. River Dija-makkājola.

Suvarṇa-dāru-muṇḍa = The foot of the Suvarṇa dāru tree.

Nokkanodā (*cf.* place-name Nāorā নাওড়া in Jessore).

Mathurāsvaltha muṇḍa = The foot of the Mathurāsvaltha tree.

[29] Subhaṅkarapāṭaka inscription of Dharmapāla of Prāg-jyotiṣa ; 12th century. [Padmanātha Bhaṭṭācāryya, Kāmarūpa-śāsanāvalī, pp. 146 ff.]

Subhaṅkarapāṭaka.

Kaṇḍiākabhiṭvi.

Sākhoṭa (*cf.* place-names Sākiṭā শাকিটা in Burdwan and Sāorā শাঁওড়া in Barisal.)

Ākhoṭa = tree.

Āśvatha, tree ; Dijinnā, river.

Locana (=rocana, tree).

Oriamma (=oriāma tree).

Vijayaśrī—noubhukta.

Kantābhakkaṛa (= ? Kāñṭhāl tree).

Oracoṣajola, river.

Trees Lohuca, ḍumbarī (the latter ḍumura ডুমুর)

Jharipākāṭi বরিপাকাটি (*cf.* Pākāṭi পাকাটি, a village in Mymensingh).

Bṛhadrābara (= ? personal name).

[30] Āmgāchi Grant of Vighraha-pāla. North-Central Bengal, Second half of the 11th century. [R. D. Banerji, VSpdP., 1323, pp. 233 ff.]

Village Brāhmaṇī in Puṇḍra-varḍhana-bhukti, Koṭi-varṣa-
viṣaya; Kroḍaṇḍi (*cf.* village-names Kuṛci, Kuṛcā কুড়চি, কুড়চা
in Burdwan).

Village Matsyāvāsa (=abode of fish)

Chatrā (*cf.* Khulna village Cātrā চাত্রা; and Cāthār চাথার,
a village in Dinajpur district). Village Posalī.

[31] Barrackpur Copper-plate of Vijayasena, 12th century.
[R. D. Banerji, EP. IND., pp. 279 ff. R. G. Basāk, Sāhitya,
Vol. XXXI (1328 B.S.), pp. 81 ff.; N. G. Mazumdar, Inscrip-
tions of Bengal, III, pp. 57-67.]

Village Ghāsa-sambhoga Bhāṭṭa-vaḍā (where Bhāṭṭa-vaḍā
present-day Bhāṭṭā ভাট্টা). Khāḍi viṣaya (*cf.* modern Bengali
Khārī খাড়ী, channel). Kāntijoṅga

Tikṣa-haṇḍa, marsh.

[32] Naihātī Copper-plate of Vallālasena. Uttara Rāḍha
or Central Bengal; early 12th century. [R. D. Banerji, EP.
IND., XIV, pp. 156 ff. A. K. Maitra, and R. G. Basāk,
Sāhitya, Kārttika and Agrahāyana, 1318 B.S. Tārak Chandra
Roy, VSPdP., Vol. XVII, pp. 231-45. Banwārīlal Goswāmī,
'Pravāsī' for Phālguna, 1317. N. G. Mazumdar, Inscriptions
of Bengal, III, pp. 68 ff.]

Village Vāla-biṭṭā (=present-day Bālutiā বালুটিয়া or Bālute
বালুটে, near Sitāhātī or Naihātī). Svalpa-dakṣiṇa-vithī (=Viṭhi).
(The word Svalpa স্বল্প occurs as common initial element in
modern place-names of Bengal)

Siṅgaṭia, river (*cf.* place-name Siṅguṭiā সিঙ্গুটিয়া in
Mymensingh).

Administrative district of Khāṇḍiyilla (=modern Bengali
Khāñṛule; *cf.* also the modern village Khāṭundī খাটুন্দী within
the same locality in Police station Ketugrām).

Village Nādicā (=present-day নাড়িচা)

Village Ambayillā (*cf.* modern Bengali Ambalgrām আশলগ্রাম)

“Nāḍḍinā”

Villages “Kuḍumvamā,” “Āuhāgaḍḍiyā,” where gaḍḍiyā
occurs as guṛi গুড়ি in place-names.

Village Surakonā-gaḍḍiā-Kiottarāli. [Cf. the modern village names Tālārī তালারী, and Keugurī কেউগুরী near Naihātī in Police-station Ketugram, Dist. Burdwan.]

Village Jalasothī (=water stream) is modern জলশোথী in Murshidabad.

Molāḍandi (=present-day Muṛandi মুড়ন্দি near the village Naihātī).

Village Simāli (cf. the village name Śiruli near Naihātī)

Tarāli (= present-day Tālārī তালারী)

[33] Govindapur Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇasena ; late 12th century [West-Central Bengal]. (Prof Amulya Charan Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Bhāratavarṣa, 1332 B.S., pp. 441-45. N. G. Mazumdar, Inscriptions of Bengal, pp. 92 ff.)

Vetaḍḍachaturaka in Paścima-Khāṭikā within Vardhanamāna bhukti (Burdwan district). Vetaḍḍa=modern Bengali Betara বেতড়. Leṅgha-deva maṇḍapī; Viḍḍara-śāsana.

[34] Tarpaṇa-dīghī Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇasena. Late 12th century. (E. V. Westmacott. JASB., Vol. XLIV (1875), Part I, pp. 11 ff.; EP. IND., Vol. XII, pp. 6 ff.; N. G. Mazumdar, Inscriptions of Bengal, III, 99 ff.)

Nica-ḍahāra, tank, “low and deep.” [Cf. modern place-names with endings ḍahara, ḍaharī ডহর, ডহরী, as Bāgḍahara বাগডহর (Murshidabad), Beleḍaharī বেলেডহরী (24-Parganas) Śāḍaharī শালডহরী (Midnapur)].

Nandiharipākunḍi [=the tank or spring belonging to Nandi Haripā(da)].

Mollāna-Khāḍī. The ditch belonging to Mollāna. [Cf. Perso-Arabic mullā; also mollāna>mṛṇāla “lotus stalk” (see ODBL., p. 187).]

Village Velahisthi in Varendrī within the Puṇḍra-Vardhana-bhukti.

[35] Mādhāi-nagara Grant. North-Central Bengal, 12th century. [R. D. Banerji, JASB., Vol. V (1909), pp. 467ff.

N. G. Mazumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 106ff.] Village Dāpuniyā-pāṭaka (*cf.* place-name Dāpuniyā দাপুনিয়া in Mymensingh). Kāntāpura; Gayanagara; Chāḍaspaśā-pāṭaka; Guṇḍī-sthirā-pāṭaka. Guṇḍī-dāpaṇiyā.

[36] Ānuliā Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇa-sena; Central Bengal, 12th century. (A. K. Maitra, *JASB.*, Vol. LXIX, Part I, 1900, i, pp. 61ff; N. G. Mazumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 81ff.) Mātharaṇḍiyā-khaṇḍa-kṣetra in the district of Vyāghra-taṭi.

[Jalapillā; Śāntigopī-śāsana. Mālāmañca-vāṭī (*cf.* modern Bengali Mālāñcabārī মালঞ্চবাড়ী, flower-garden house).]

[37] Sundarban Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇa-sena, Central Bengal, 12th century. [Paṇḍit Rāṅgati Nyāyaratna, *Bāṅglā-bhāṣā O Sāhityaviśayaka Prastāva*, Chinsurah, San 1294, pp. 325-327, Hiranmaya Mukherji, *Mitrodaya*, Vol. I, No. 6, p. 37. Kailash Chandra Singha, *Bhāratī*, Vol. IV, pp. 495-62. N. G. Mazumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 169 ff.]

Khāḍī district in Puṇḍravardhana.

Villages—Kān-talla-pura; Śāntya-śāvi.

Meṇḍala-grāma; Citāḍī-khāta (*cf.* Citurī চিতুরী, a village in Birbhum).

[38] The Śaktipur Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇa-sena. West Bengal, 12th-13th century. (Rames Basu, *VSPdP.*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 216 ff.; Dharendra Chandra Gāṅgulī. *EP. IND.*, Vol. XXI, No. 37, pp. 211 ff.) Kumārapura Caturaka.

Kumbhīnagara. Kaṅkagrāma-bhukti.

Bārahakoṇā (= ? modern Barakoṇā).

Bāllihita (*cf.* vālla-hiṭṭā of Naihātī Śāsana, see 32) = modern Baluṭiyā or Bālute, বালুটিয়া, বালুটে।

Nijhā-pāṭaka (= ? Nimā-pāṭaka)

Bhāgaḍī-Khaṇḍa-Kṣetra.

Acchamā-gopatha.

Rāghava-haṭṭa-pāṭaka.

Mālikuṇḍā—where Kuṇḍā occurs as common second part in place-names of Bengal.

Mocanadī ; Lāṅgala-jolī ; Cākaliyājolī.

Parajāna Gopatha.

Tāmara-barā (= ? Dāmara-barā), *cf.* Bāṅgālabarā.

Bijahārapura pāṭaka.

Chatra-pāṭaka. (*Cf.* a village Cāṭrā চাট্রা in Mymensingh.)

[39] Madanapādā Copper-plate of Viśvarūpasena. (N. G. Mazumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 132 ff. ; Nagendranath Basu, *JASB.*, 1896, Part I, pp. 6-15) 12th-13th century, East Bengal. Village Piñjo-Kāṣṭhī ; village Aṭhapāga (= Āṭhapāka) ; Uñchokāṣṭhī (= uñcākāṣṭhī, high wood) ; village Virakāṭṭī ; Nārāntapa.

Village Bārāyī-paḍā (= modern Bengali Bāraipārā বারইপাড়া, quarter of betel-vine growers).

[40] Calcutta Sāhitya-Parīṣat Copper-plate of Viśvarūpasena ; 12th-13th century. East Bengal. [MM. Haraprasād Śāstrī, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. II, No. I, March, 1926, pp. 77-86 ; N. G. Mazumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 140 ff.] Rāmasiddhi-pāṭaka in the Nāvya region of Vaṅga in the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti.

Village Vinayatilaka ; Ajikulāpāṭaka. Village Deulahastī. Lāuhaṇḍā-caturaka ; Ghāgharakāṭṭī-pāṭaka in Urāchaturaka. [I]ndradvīpa ; Pātilādivīka. (Navasaṃgraha-caturaka.)

[41] Edilpur Grant of Kesavasena ; East Bengal, 12th-13th century. [R. D. Banerji, *Journal and Proceedings of the ASB.*, Vol. X, pp. 94-104 ; N. G. Mazumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 118 ff.] Village Tāla-paḍā-pāṭaka (in Vikrampura in Vaṅga within Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti). Sattrakādvī (= dvīpa). Śāṅkara-pāśā (*cf.* modern Bengali word pāśā < pārśaka পাশ < পার্শ্ব, side, quarter, occurring as common final element in village names of Bengal) ; Govindakelī ; Bāguli-villagada.

[42]. Chittagong Copper-plate of 1243 A.C. [Prāṇanāth Paṇḍit, *JASB.*, Vol. XLIII (1874), Part I, pp. 318ff. ;

N. G. Mazumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 158ff.]
 Dāmbāradāma (*cf.* Dāngurā ডাঙ্গুরা a village in Pabna and
 Dobrā ডোবরা in Faridpur); Kamanā-piṇḍiyāka. Ketaṅgapālā
 (*cf.* village-name Lāupālā লাউপালা in Khulna); Lambasāsana;
 Navrāpālya; Mṛtacchadā; where Cchadā is found as Charā ছড়া
 in names (*e.g.*, Ākcharā আকছড়া in Midnapur). Bāgha-pokhirā.

CHAPTER II

Every village name has got a meaning behind it—either expressed or disguised. It must have a history. With the name of a village the ancient history of the place may be closely connected. In course of time, the real nature of a name tends to be corrupted through phonetic change, and then it becomes rather difficult to get at the true meaning of the village. Most of the modern Bengal place-names which have come down to us through wears and tears of centuries have certainly changed a great deal of their original forms, and sometimes it has become very difficult even to determine the proper line of their modification. In order to have the real meaning of the village, we must look to the early history of the place. But it is to be regretted that there have not been found any authentic records by which we can judge the modifications of the names and consequently the early history in connection with the village name is also shrouded with mystery. No systematic work on this subject has yet been done, only a few scholars have touched upon it. Professor S. K. Chatterji in his “Origin and Development of the Bengali Language” has shown the importance of the study of place-names from Linguistic, Anthropological and Historical points of view and his discussion on the older place-names from Inscriptions found in Bengal and Assam is a marvellous treatment. The preliminary things for doing any work on the “Place-names of Bengal” is to get in hand authentic lists of names of villages and other inhabited places as well as of rivers and the like. For this purpose, we have to examine the Revenue Survey lists, the Post-office lists,

the Railway Station lists, the District Gazetteers and similar works. Among these sources, the Post-office lists and the Railway Station lists give improper English transcriptions of Bengali names. So, practically, these lists are of very limited use to us. The names of villages that are available in the Jurisdiction lists of the Survey Office have been preserved both in English and Bengali scripts and probably with much accuracy and precision than the other sources. But instances are not rare where one can detect wilful attempts on the part of some Settlement Officers to give the names either a Sanskritic look or to change them according to the English orthography. Hence, the ignorance of these people has often led to unpardonable mistakes. So, every precaution must be taken in order to avoid this pitfall as far as practicable.

As these lists of village names embracing thousands of them are not available to the outside public, they have been mainly taken from the Jurisdiction lists of the Survey Office. But the Survey Office lists of village-names of a few districts are partly available only in English characters, without any diacritical marks. This means that one cannot be quite sure of the original form in each and every case. In order to trace the Bengali source forms, the names occurring therein must be verified by local people as to the proper pronunciation. There are about one lakh of villages in Bengal but we are not concerned with all of them. Names which are of Aryan origin do not trouble us much. We are to deal mainly with those names which are *tadbhava* and of non-Aryan Origin. A few place-names of the districts of Sylhet, Mānbhūm, Singbhūm, Pūrṇiā, Hājāribāg and Santal Parganas have been included in this work, as these districts practically form part of Bengal both linguistically and racially, from the very earliest times, although they now politically belong to the provinces of Assam and Behar. Only a few important place-names are found in the District Gazetteers and they have also been written in English charac-

ters. Sometimes there has been made a feeble attempt to trace the origin of some names, but often with futility.

As a matter of fact, the English spelling of several important places, Railway stations, district and sub-divisional towns often are unconsciously influencing the actual pronunciation. Thus Saktigaṛ is generally heard as Sāktigaṛ owing to the English form Saktigarh.

In some cases, the English mode of writing has completely changed the proper spelling. Thus “Bandel” has become Byāṇḍel [bæṇḍel]. The word is a Portuguese modification of the Persian word *bandar*, “port.” Kāñthi frequently becomes Coṇṭāi. Cāṭgāñ has become Chittagong [Ciṭāgāṅg] [চিটাগং]. The standard Bengali form is Cāṭigāo, locally Saiṭṭæñ. Cūcurā has been transformed into Chinsurā [চিন্‌সুরা]. Similarly Medinīpur is written and often pronounced Miḍnāpur.

In this connection, the following instances may also be noticed, how English mispronunciation and improper English transcription of Bengali (and other Indian) names influence the original forms :—

Bāñrurjyā বাঁড়ুজ্যা	< EB. baruirdza
For Bænārjji বানার্জি	Cal. bārũjʒe.
Cāṭurjyā চাটুর্জ্যা	< EB. tsauirdze(a)
For Cæṭārjji. চাটাৰ্জি	Cal. csaũjʒe

Similary Thākur ঠাকুর is now written as Tagore [টাগোর] owing to the English model of writing Tagore.

Ignorance of local spelling is often responsible for very funny errors appearing in vernacular journals. Being repeatedly printed in newspapers, these wrong pronunciations and spellings are slowly modifying the actual pronunciations and spellings. Unless ruthlessly checked, this kind of irresponsible journalism will very soon make a havoc of modern Bengali place-names. A few examples are given below :—“Dāihāt” is written in Roman script as Dainhat which is retransliterated as দৈনহাট and some-

times even as Dainhātā. “Nætrā” নাতড়া (24-Parganas), “Pātuāir” পাতুয়াইর (Mymensingh) are written as Natra and Patuair which are often pronounced as Nātrā নাটরা and Pātuāir পাটুয়াইর. This bad habit of writing the Bengali names after English fashion may be seen from the examples given below :

“Bangāñ” বনগাঁ is written as Baṅgañ বঙ্গ. Similarly “Goāltor” গোয়ালতোর (Midnapur), “Dākop” দাকোপ (Jessore), “Betāgair” বেতাগৈর (Mymensingh), “Dullā” ডুল্লা (Mymensingh), “Deoḍukun” দেওডুকুন (Mymensingh), “Duāīgāñ” দুয়াইগাঁ (Mymensingh), “Gotāsīā” গোটাসিয়া, “Ourāil” ওরাইল are written in Roman character as Goaltor, Dakop, Betagair, Dullā, Deodokan, Duaigāñ, Gotasia, Aurail, respectively through which they are retransliterated as গোয়ালটোর, ডাকোপ, বেটাগাইর, ডুল্লা, দেওদোকান, দুয়াইগাঁও, গোটাসিয়া and আউরাইল. Besides English and other foreign influence, the place-names of Bengal have also been modified to some extent due to a Sanskritising tendency. Gāñ (গাঁও), or Gāñ (গাঁ), Bārī বাড়ী, Dā দা are often changed into Grām (গ্রাম), Bāṭī (বাটি) and Daha, দহ *e.g.*, “Bāñiāgāñ” (বানিয়াগাঁও), “Nayā-gāñ” (নয়াগাঁও), “Nayābārī”, (নয়াবাড়ী) and “Cākdā” (চাকদা) are written as Bāñigrām (বাণীগ্রাম), Nūtangrām (নূতনগ্রাম), Nūtanbāṭī (নূতনবাটি) and Cakradaha (চক্রদহ) respectively.

Bhāṭpārā (ভাটপাড়া) is written as Bhaṭṭapallī (ভট্টপল্লী), although pārā (পাড়া) comes from pāṭaka (পাটক) and not from pallī (পল্লী), as is generally thought of. (See Pravāsī, Āśvina, 1317 B.S., “Bāṅglā Grāmer Nām” by Jogeshchandra Roy Vidyānidhi.) Gūtāurā (গুতাউড়া) (a village in Tipperah) is sometimes written as Gautamapārā (গৌতমপাড়া). Similarly “Kalikātā” (কলিকাতা) and “Jorāsāñko” take the form “Kālīkṣetra” (কালীক্ষেত্র) and Yugmasetu (যুগ্মসেতু) respectively. “Āṭghariā” (আটঘরিয়া) and “Māijpārā” (মাইজপাড়া) are written as Aṣṭaghari (অষ্টঘরি) and Madhyapallī (মধ্যপল্লী). The name of the district town “Sileṭ” (সিলেট) has been changed into Śrīhaṭṭa (শ্রীহট্ট). The village name “Gophan” (গোফন) [GoFan] in Tipperah district is written as Gokarṇa (গোকর্ণ); “Mānasiri” (মানসিরি) and “Tāukrākoṇā” (টাউক্ৰাকোণা) two villages in

Mymensingh have been Sanskritised to Mānaśrī (মানস্রী) and Thākuraṅga (ঠাকুরকোণ). Similarly there are many names found throughout Bengal which have been modified in this way. Still, they are of great importance to Linguisticians, as they indicate the line of change in the phonetics of these names and help to form some idea about the genuine old form.

The following elements are found in the place-names of Bengal—*Tatsama*, *Semi-tatsama*, *Tadbhava*, Perso-Arabic, Deśi (i.e., names of aboriginal and unexplained origin) and a few foreign words. *Tatsama* or Sanskrit names do not present any difficulty. Although the bulk of the modern place-names of Bengal are of Aryan origin, yet there are thousands of names which are Prākṛit and non-Aryan words (or we may better call them as names of doubtful origin and obscure in meaning also) as their components. These words are mostly in mutilated forms and make the crux of the subject. It is quite possible that some of these names are of Aryan origin only obscured by heavy phonetic change. In many cases, names which are not of Aryan origin, are exceedingly difficult, sometimes impossible with the present stage of our knowledge to account for. There are again some names which can be explained most satisfactorily, when we approach them from the standpoint of non-Aryan, Dravidian Kol and Tibeto-Burman.

We do not know, what kind of speech was current before the coming of the Aryan tongue in Bengal. As we find a large number of Dravidian, Kol, Tibeto-Burman and other words of unexplained origin in the vocabulary of Bengali language as well as in the place-names, it can be asserted that the Pre-Aryans of Bengal were certainly influenced both in blood as well as in tongue by the Dravidians and Kols who lived in the western borders of the Bengal area and by the Tibeto-Burman people living in the northern and eastern fringes.

In the old Bengali inscriptions, dating from the 5th century A. D., we have names of villages, rivers and other places recorded which throw a valuable light on the history of Bengali Toponymy

and incidentally on the question of a non-Aryan substratum in the people and culture of Bengal. It is gratifying to note that in a few instances, we have fuller forms of these names preserved in old Inscriptions. A village called Bāluṭiyā বালুটিয়া, or Bāluṭe বালুটে at the present day was known as Bāllahiṭṭā or Bāllihita in the 12th century (*vide* Naihāṭī Copper-plate of Ballāla Sena and Śaktipur Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇa Sena). Pābnā পাবনা was something like Pawubannā (written Paduvanvā) in the 11th century or Brahma-Cāla was Barawañcāla (written Varapañcāla) in the 9th century. Similarly Khārjuli খারজুলি was Khaddajotikā, Maḥarā or Maorā মহড়া, মওড়া was Madhuvāṭaka, Bāktā বাক্তা was Bakkataka and Karorī করোরী was Kaḍḍavīra in the 6th century, as we find from the Malla-sarul Copper-plate Inscriptions of Gopa [Chandra] and Vijaya Sena.

Similarly, other place-names from the Inscriptions make it quite clear that we had to deal with a local nomenclature, which is in many cases non-Aryan. We have as elements in the old place-names of Bengal words like Jola, Joli, Joṭa, Joṭikā, hiṭṭi, Bhiṭṭi, viṭi, hiṣṭ(h)i, gaḍḍa, gaḍḍi, pola, vola; and probably also haṇḍa, kuṇḍa, Kuṇḍi, Cavaṭi, Cavāḍa and Vaḍā and many others, which can be explained as of Dravidian or Kol origin. From these names, we get quite a conclusive idea regarding the prevalence of non-Aryan languages in ancient Bengal. The possible non-Aryan elements may be traced in the following modern Bengali place-names.

Modern Bengali Place-names with the endings [Jola], [Joli], [Joṭa], [Joṭikā] meaning channel, water-course, river, water are quite abundant specially in the districts of West Bengal. (See, ODBL., pp. 65-67.)

[Jol] জোল “Channel” (Dravidian Joṭa). It is found in Kandh as “jorr”. [*Cf.* also Assamese Jol জোল, water.] The word Joṭa is found in the Khālimpur Grant of Dharmapāla. (See 9.) A few names with “Jol” জোল as their common final elements are given below :—

Thus, [Sonājol] সোণাজোল (Hughli, Maldah) [Hug., Mal.]

[Śinjol] শিংজোল (Jessore) [Jes.]

[Puñṭijol] পুন্টীজোল (Murshidabad) [Mur.]

[Kāñkrājol] কাঁকরাজোল (Hug.)

[Dhobājol] ধোবাজোল (Birbhum) [Bir.]

[Nārājol] নাড়াজোল (Midnapur) [Mid.]

[Bāgājol] বাগাজোল (Bankura) [Ban.]

[Āmjolā] আমজোলা (Bir.)

[Lakṣmījolā] লক্ষ্মীজোলা (Mur.)

[Cāmārjol] চামারজোল (Mal.)

[Gājol] গাজোল (Mal.)

[Jolī] জোলী (= Dravidian Joṭikā).

Names ending in Jolī জোলী or Julī জুলী are also found in the districts of West Bengal, *e.g.*,

[Khārjuli] খারজুলী (Burdwan) [Bur.]

[Taljuli] তলজুলী [Mid.]

[Dakṣiṇajuli] দক্ষিণজুলী (Mid.)

[Kāijuli] কাইজুলী (Bir.)

Dravidian [Joṭa] and [Joṭikā] occur also as [Joṛa] জোড়, [Joṛā] জোড়া or [Juṛā] জুড়া, [Juṛi] জুড়ি or even as [Juriā] জুড়িয়া. [The words Joṭa and Joṭikā are found in the Khālimpur grant of Dharmapāla.]

They occur everywhere in Bengal.

Thus, [Pābiājor] পাবিয়াজোড় (Mymensingh) [Mym.]

[Dāpnājor] দাপনাজোড় (Mym.)

[Hāljor] হাইলজোড় (Dacca) [Dac.]

[Kākjor] কাকজোড় (Dac.)

(It is to be noted in this connection that as most of the East Bengal dialects change “O” to “U”, “Joṛ” জোড় is often written as Jur জুড়.)

[Śinjor] শিংজোড় (Khulna) [Khu.]

[Mūlājor] মূলাজোড় (24-Parganas) [24-P.]

[Hetājor] হেতালজোড় (Mid.)

[Sāljor] শালজোড় (Howrah) [How.]

[Āmlājorā] আমলাজোড়া (Bur.)

- [Sāljoṛā] শালজোড়া (Mid.)
 [Bhurjoṛā] ভুরজোড়া (Bir.)
 [Nīljoṛā] নীলজোড়া (Bankura) [Ban.]
 [Bākaljoṛā] বাকলজোড়া (Mym.)
 [Biljoṛā] বিলজোড়া (Mym.)
 [Āṅgārjoṛā] আঙ্গারজোড়া (Dac.)
 [Bānājoṛā] বানাজোড়া (Barisal) [Bar.]
 [Cf. also (Joṛasāñko) “river-bridge” Sanskritised as Yugma-setu যুগ্মসেতু to mean “double-bridge” (see ODBL., p. 66).]

(Juri) জুড়ি

- [Khāliyajuri] খালিয়াজুড়ি (Mym.)
 [Bālijuri] বালিজুড়ি (Mym., Bur.)
 [Kaijuri] কইজুড়ি (Dac.)
 [Puñṭijuri] পুঁটিজুড়ি (Faridpur) [Far.]
 [Āmrājuri] আমড়াজুড়ি (Bar.)
 [Phulāijuri] ফুলাইজুড়ি (Tipperah) [Tip.]
 [Bāinjuri] বাইনজুড়ি (Chittagong) [Chi.]
 [Simjuri] শিমজুড়ি (Bur., Bir.)
 [Kukrājuri] কুকরাজুড়ি (Mid.)
 [Kuñājuri] কুঁজাজুড়ি (Mid.)
 [Tāmāijuri] তামাইজুড়ি (Mid.)
 [Ārājuri] আড়াজুড়ি (Ban.)
 [Dānjuri] ডাংজুড়ি (Ban.)
 [Kurājuri] কুড়ালজুড়ি (Bir.)
 [Nekrājuriā] নেকড়াজুড়িয়া (Bur.)
 [Kharjuriā] খড়জুড়িয়া (Ban.)
 [Garjuriā] গড়জুড়িয়া (Ban.)

The suffixes [Jhor] ঝোর or [Jhorā] ঝোরা of modern place-names may also be compared with Kannaḍa “Joru”, drip, flow, trickle. [See ODBL., pp. 65-67.]

Thus we have :

- [Burijhor] বুড়িঝোর (Mid.)
 [Khārujhor] খাড়ুঝোর (Ban.)
 [Āsanjhor] আসনঝোর (Ban.)
 [Muriājhorā] মুরিয়াঝোরা (Far.)

[Karnajhorā] কর্ণঝোরা (Mym.)

[Sāñkojhorā] সাঁকোঝোরা (Jalpaiguri) [Jal.]

[Singijhorā] সিঙ্গিঝোরা (Darjeeling) [Dar.]

Dravidian (B)hiṭṭi is found in modern Bengali in the form of “Bhiṭi” or “Bhiṭā” ভিটি, ভিটা, homestead, homestead land. (Cf. Tamil Viṭu, Vittu, house.) Hiṭṭi, bhiṭṭi, occur in a few village names in old inscriptions (see Khālimpur Grant of Dharmapāla), e.g., Campā-hiṭṭi (-hiṣṭi), Hastinī-bhiṭṭa, Villa-hiṣṭi (where ṭṭ is Sanskritised as ṣṭ), Piṇḍāra viṭi.

Place-names ending in bhiṭi or bhiṭā ভিটি, ভিটা are found almost in every district of Bengal, e.g.,

[Corerbhiṭā] চোরেরভিটা (Mym.)

[Hiribhiṭā] হিরিভিটা (Mym.)

[Banbhiṭā] বনভিটা (Bogra) [Bog.]

[Rāṅgābhiṭā] রাঙ্গাভিটা (Mal.)

[Bhogbhiṭā] ভোগভিটা (Dar.)

[Jugībhiṭā] যুগীভিটা (Dar.)

[Kariābhiṭā] করিয়াভিটা (Khulna) [Khu.]

[Bātibhiṭā] বাতিভিটা (Khu.)

[Betbhiṭā] বেতভিটা (Jes.)

Gaḍḍa, gaḍḍi and guḍi are found in Āuhā-gaḍḍi, Sura-Koṇā-gaḍḍi, Sila-guḍi in inscriptions. We may compare them with Telugu “gaḍḍa” and Kannaḍa “gaḍḍe,” lump, mass, clot; bank, brink, edge. (See. ODBL., pp. 65-67.)

Dravidian gaḍḍa, gaḍḍi are found as “gurā” or “guṛi” গুড়া, গুড়ি in the modern place-names which occur generally in North Bengal (cf. also modern Bengali Kuñra কুঁড়, heap). “Guṛi” may also be a variant of “Kuñra”. Thus we have,

[Bhālāguṛi] ভালাগুড়ি (Rangpur) [Ran.]

[Bairātiguṛi] বৈরাতিগুড়ি (Jal.)

[Jalpāiguṛi] জলপাইগুড়ি (Jal.)

[Binnāguṛi] বিন্নাগুড়ি (Jal.)

[Simūlguṛi] শিমূলগুড়ি (Jal.)

[Dhabalguṛi] ধবলগুড়ি (Jal.)

[Ballālguṛi] বল্লালগুড়ি (Jal.)

[Bāugurī] বাউগুড়ি (Dar.)

[Doubhāgurī] ডৌহাগুড়ি (Dar.)

[Māndlāgurī] মান্দলাগুড়ি (Dar.)

[Dumrigurī] ডুমরিগুড়ি (Dar.)

[Tetulgurī] তেতুলগুড়ি (Dar.) “The foot of a tamarind tree.”

“Pola” and “Vola” with which may be compared Telugu “Polamu” field, cornland, and Kannaḍa “Polal” field, are also found in the place-names of Bengal. (See ODBL., pp. 65-67.) These words also occur in early Bengal in names like Jayarāṭī-pola, Uṇāi-pola, Ajhaḍā-Cāu-Vola, Dhra-Vola. Modern Bengal place-names with these endings may also be cited. They are found in central and west Bengal. Thus,

[Piplāpol] পিপলাপোল (Khu.)

[Palāśapol] পলাশপোল (Khu.)

[Benāpol] বেনাপোল (Jes.)

[Āltāpol] আলতাপোল (Jes.)

[Petrāpol] পেটরাপোল (Jes.)

[Pāśāpol] পাশাপোল (Jes.)

[Jogīpol] যোগীপোল (Jes., 24-P.)

[Mocpol] মোচপোল (24-P.)

[Gilāpol] গিলাপোল (Nadia) [Nad.]

[Satyapol] সত্যপোল (Nad.)

[Gurepol] গুড়িপোল (How.)

[Bāgātāpol] বাগাতাপোল (Bar.)

Besides, we have such names as [Kāśīābhol] কাশিয়াভোল and [Kapatibhol] কপতিভোল occurring in the district of Midnapur, where “bhola” might be compared to vola, and pola.

Tamil “aṇḍai,” vicinity, raised side of a field, boundary may be compared to a new Bengali word “hākaṇḍa” হাকণ্ড occurring in the place-names such as [Choṭahākaṇḍa] ছোটহাকণ্ড and [Gujihākaṇḍa] গুজিহাকণ্ড in the district of Midnapur.

[Kuṇḍa] কুণ্ড, [Kuṇḍā] কুণ্ডা, and [Kuṇḍī] কুণ্ডী (and most probably the new Bengali word Kuṇḍra কুঁড়, heap, little hillock, dunghill) are connected with Telugu Kuṇḍa meaning hill, rock.

Modern place-names with these endings are found almost in every district of Bengal, *e.g.*,

- [Dhalkuṇḍa] ধলকুণ্ড (Dac.)
- [Pāṅkuṇḍa] পানকুণ্ড (Dac.)
- [Lāruākūṇḍa] লাড়ুয়াকুণ্ড (Dac.)
- [Solākūṇḍa] শোলাকুণ্ড (Far.)
- [Sītākūṇḍa] সীতাকুণ্ড (Chi.)
- [Tailākūṇḍa] তৈলকুণ্ড (Pab.)
- [Muriākūṇḍa] মুরিয়াকুণ্ড (Mal.)
- [Sūryyakūṇḍa] সূর্য্যাকুণ্ড (Jes.)
- [Āgrākūṇḍa] আগ্রাকুণ্ড (Nad.)
- [Debakūṇḍa] দেবকুণ্ড (Bur., Mur.)
- [Bilāikūṇḍa] বিলাইকুণ্ড (Mid.)
- [Lālākūṇḍa] লালকুণ্ড (Mid.)
- [Tukuniākūṇḍu] টুকুনিয়াকুণ্ড (24-P.)
- [Gholkūṇḍa] ঘোলকুণ্ড (Ban.)
- [Nakūṇḍa] নকুণ্ড (Hug.)
- [Māṅkūṇḍu] মানকুণ্ড (Hug.)
- [Kāmārkūṇḍu] কামারকুণ্ড (Hug.)
- [Daharkūṇḍu] ডহরকুণ্ড (Hug.)
- [Galkūṇḍā] গলকুণ্ডা (Mym.)
- [Dhankūṇḍā] ধনকুণ্ডা (Dac.)
- [Kānāitkūṇḍā] কানাইতকুণ্ডা (Raj.)
- [Lāukūṇḍā] লাউকুণ্ডা (Jes.)
- [Bhurkūṇḍā] ভুরকুণ্ডা (24-P., Mur., Bur., Hug., Ban.)
- [Ulkūṇḍā] উলকুণ্ডা (Bur.)
- [Dumurkūṇḍā] ডুমুরকুণ্ডা (Mid.)
- [Deulkūṇḍā] দেউলকুণ্ডা (Mid.)
- [Kockūṇḍā] কোচকুণ্ডা (Ban.)
- [Tuṣkūṇḍā] তুষকুণ্ডা (Bir.)
- [Mirkūṇḍī] মিরকুণ্ডী (Dac.)
- [Sitāikūṇḍī] সিতাইকুণ্ডী (Far.)
- [Pradhānkūṇḍī] প্রধানকুণ্ডী (Raj.)
- Bhātkūṇḍī] ভাতকুণ্ডী (Raj.)
- Lakṣmīkūṇḍī লক্ষ্মীকুণ্ডী (Pab.)

[Pāthārkunḍi] পাথারকুণ্ডী (Mal.)

[Cāulkunḍi] চাউলকুণ্ডী (Mid.)

[Dudhkunḍi] দুধকুণ্ডী (Mid.)

[Khalisākunḍi] খলিসাকুণ্ডী (Nad.)

[Kālīakunḍi] কালিয়াকুণ্ডী (Jes.)

[Ujalkuñra] উজলকুঁড় (Khu.) (It is to be noted in this connection that “Kuñra” কুঁড় may also come from Sanskrit Kūṭa কূট, highland.)

[Soṇākuñra] সোণাকুঁড় (Khu., Jes., Bur., Far., Bar.)

[Masjidkuñra] মসজিদকুঁড় (Khu.)

[Nidhkuñra] নিধকুঁড় (Nad.)

[Āṣṭikuñra] আষ্টিকুঁড় (Bur.)

[Rājkuñra] রাজকুঁড় (Dac.)

[Mānkuñra] মানকুঁড় (Raj.)

[Piclākuñri] পিছলাকুঁড়ি (Mym.)

[Kākiākuñri] কাকিয়াকুঁড়ি (Mym.)

[Solākuñri] সোলাকুঁড়ি (Dac.)

[Āltākuñri] আলতাকুঁড়ি (Far.)

[Kāickuñri] কাইচকুঁড়ি (Far.)

[Tiorkuñri] তিওরকুঁড়ি (Raj.)

[Māikuñri] মাইকুঁড়ি (Raj.)

[Kockuñri] কোচকুঁড়ি (Raj., Bog.)

[Māguākuñri] মাগুয়াকুঁড়ি (Raj.)

[Ekarkuñri] একরকুঁড়ি (Raj.)

[Nuniākuñri] নুনিয়াকুঁড়ি (Din.)

[Siñṛākuñri] সিঁড়াকুঁড়ি (Din.)

[Jhināikuñri] বিনাইকুঁড়ি (Din. Mal.)

[Bhādāikuñri] ভাদাইকুঁড়ি (Bog.)

[Cūṇkuñri] চূণকুঁড়ি (Khu.)

[Pickuñri] পিচকুঁড়ি (Bur.)

[Khudkuñri] খুদকুঁড়ি (Bur.)

[Cāulkunḍi] চাউলকুঁড়ি (Mid.)

[Bālikuñri] বালিকুঁড়ি (How.)

[Khayrākuñri] খয়রাকুঁড়ি (Bir.)

[Simlākuñri] শিমলাকুঁড়ি (Bir.)

[Belekuñri] বেলেকুঁড়ি (Ban.).

[Kalākuñri] কলাকুঁড়ি (Ban.).

The word [Caṭi] চটী, lodge, posthouse comes from Cāvaṭi, Cāpaṭi, Cavāḍa (*cf.* Telugu and Kannaḍa Cāvaṭi).

[Caṭi or Caḍi] চটী বা চড়ী is also a village in Mymensingh.

The words [daha] দহ and [dā] দা found as common second part or suffixes are also of Austric origin (*cf.* Muṇḍā “dā” water). One thing, however, is to be noted in this connection that the *tadbhava* form *daha* < *hrada* may have exerted some semantic influence on the Kolārian word “dā,” *e.g.*,

[Cākdā] চাকদা (Dac.)

[Haldā] হলদা (Jes.)

[Neodā] নেওদা (24-P.)

[Naodā] নওদা (Mur., Bur.)

[Beṅgdā] বেঙ্গদা (Mid.)

[Sāhardā] সাহরদা (Mid.)

[Mākardā] মাকরদা (How.)

[Jugdā] জুগদা (Ban.)

[Āmudā] আমুদা (Tip.)

[Dhaldā] ধলদা (Mal.)

[Parāṇdaha] পরাণদহ (Khu.)

[Āṅgārdaha] আঙ্গারদহ (Jes.)

[Khaṛdaha] খড়দহ (24 P.)

[Dāmurdaha] দামুরদহ (How.)

[Sāṭidaha] সাটিদহ (Hug.)

[Sābaldaha] সাবলদহ (Mur.)

Names containing the retroflex sound (ɽ) “ড়” are often liable to mis-spelling and mispronunciation owing to the fact that there are no means of transliterating this sound in Roman [though ɽh (̣) is sometimes written as (rh)]. The fact that the retroflex sound is unknown in many dialects of Bengal has added further to the confusion. Place-names ending in [rā] ড়া are found plentifully all over Bengal. The nature of these names is so much complex that it is a very intricate problem in Indian Linguistics to find out the real line of their solution. Of course,

a few names may be explained as having some connection with Dravidian Vaḍā, or Kol word Orak “house.” To cite some very well-known names —

[Dādrā] দাদড়া (Mym.) ; [Bagurā] বগুড়া (Mym., Jeṣ., Bog.)
 [Kāorā] কাওড়া (Mym., Dac.) ; [Ācrā] আচড়া (Mym.) ; [Jājirā] জাজিড়া (Dac.) ; [Māmurā] মামুড়া (Dac.) ; [Indrā] ইন্দড়া (Dac.) ;
 [Hāsārā] হাসাড়া (Far.) ; [Pāsārā] পাশাড়া (Far.) ; [Sāorā] সাওড়া (Far., Bar.) ; [Āorā] আওড়া (Bar.) ; [Jhāṭrā] ঝাটিড়া (Bar.) ;
 [Sācrā] সাচড়া (Bar.) ; [Tāṭrā] টাটিড়া (Tip.) ; [Jāorā] জাওড়া (Tip.) ; [Jhikurā] ঝিকুড়া (Tip.) ; [Haorā] হাওড়া (Tip., How.) ;
 [Pāpurā] পাপুড়া (Noa.) [Phāorā] ফাওড়া (Nao.) ; [Balorā] বলোড়া (Nao.) ; [Okhrā] ওখড়া (Chi.) ; [Bhoṅgrā] ভোঙ্গড়া (Chi.) ;
 [Pomrā] পোমড়া (Chi.) ; [Sāṅkrā] সাঁকড়া (Raj.) ; [Cinrā] চিনড়া (Raj.) ; [Kayrā] কয়ড়া (Raj.) ; [Ukhrā] উখড়া (Mal.) ; [Dhobrā] ধোবড়া (Mal.) ; [Jhāñjrā] ঝাঞ্জড়া (Mal.) ; [Singrā] সিঙ্গড়া (Din.)
 [Jhāpra] ঝাপড়া (Din.) ; [Chāndurā] চান্দুড়া (Din.) ; [Cāorā] চাওড়া (Khu.) ; [Ukhrā] উখড়া (Khu.) ; [Thekrā] ঠেকড়া (Khu.)
 [Mākrā] মাকড়া (Jes.) ; [Bābrā] বাবড়া (Jes.) ; [Bhāṭrā] ভাটিড়া (Jes., Mym.) ; [Bāñkurā] বাঁকুড়া (Jes., Ban.) ; [Netrā] নেতড়া (24-P.) ; [Jojrā] জোজড়া (24-P.) ; [Ākrā] আকড়া (24-P.) ;
 [Tyāgrā] ট্যাগড়া (Hug.) ; [Somrā] সোমড়া (Hug.) ; [Gutrā] গুতড়া (Hug.) ; [Ādrā] আদ্রা (How.) ; [Kālorā] কলোড়া (How.) ;
 [Goṅgrā] গোঙ্গড়া (Nad.) ; [Gobrā] গোবড়া (Nad.) ; [Gāṭrā] গাটিড়া (Nad.) ; [Hilorā] হিলোড়া (Mur.) ; [Ojhrā] ওঝড়া (Mur.) ;
 [Motārā] মোতাড়া (Mur.) ; [Reorā] রেওড়া (Bur.) ; [Ulārā] উলাড়া (Bur.) ; [Budrā] বুদড়া (Bur.) ; [Ikrā] ইকড়া (Bir.) ; [Kuturā] কুতুড়া (Bir.) ; [Dhāmṛā] ডামড়া (Bir.) ; [Gogrā] গোগড়া (Ban.) ;
 [Besārā] বেসড়া (Ban.) ; [Rādrā] রাদড়া (Ban.) ; [Ceñcurā] চেঁচুড়া (Mid.) ; [Sagrā] সগড়া (Mid.) ; [Nāsṛā] নাসড়া (Mid.) ; [Pherurā] ফেরুড়া (Mid.) ; [Hādirā] হাদিড়া (Mid.), etc.

But the following names may also be explained as of OIA origin. Thus,

- [Ekṛā] একড়া (= Ekavāṭaka) “a unit settlement”
 [Āgrā] আগড়া (= Agravāṭaka) “a forward settlement”
 [Āṭrā] আটড়া (= Aṣṭavāṭaka) “eight settlements”

- [Sātrā] সাতড়া (= Saptavāṭaka) “seven settlements”
 [Rājā] রাজড়া (= Rājavāṭaka) “a royal settlement”
 [Kulā] কুলড়া (= Kulavāṭaka) “a family settlement”
 [Kāorā] কাওড়া (= Kākavāṭaka) “a nester roost of a crow.”
 [Goyārā] গোয়াড়া (= Gopavāṭaka) “a cowherd settlement.”
 [Deyārā] দেয়াড়া (= Devavāṭaka) “a god’s temple”
 [Manrā] মনড়া (= Manavāṭaka) (?)
 [Diyārā] দিয়াড়া (= Dvīvāṭaka) “an island settlement.”

Place-names ending in [Śola] শোল, [Solā] শোলা, [Suli] শুলি, “channel,” “stream” are found abundantly in the districts of We-t Bengal, specially in Burdwan, Midnapur and Bankura. The word [Śola] শোল is probably Dravidian. (Cf. Jola, Joli জোল, জোলী in place-names.)

Thus, we have [Āsāśol] আসানশোল (Bur.) ; [Śiyārśol] শিয়ারশোল (Bur., Bar.) ; [Benāśol] বেনাশোল (Bur.) ; [Bābuiśol] বাবুইশোল (Bur.). The following names occurs in the district of Midnapur : [Bhukibhukīśol] ভুকিভুকিশোল ; [Phengāśol] ফেঙ্গাশোল ; [Jāurīśol] জাউরিশোল ; [Tāngāśol] টাঙ্গাশোল ; [Hingīśol] হিংগিশোল ; [Beṅgāīśol] বেঙ্গাইশোল ; [Pāñjāśol] পাঞ্জাশোল ; [Kāñkīāśol] কাঁকড়াশোল ; [Dhaṛāśol] ঢড়াশোল ; [Cekuyāśol] চেকুয়াশোল ; [Junśol] জুনশোল ; [Bheduyāśol] ভেদুয়াশোল ; [Khayrāśol] খয়রাশোল ; [Bhurkuṇḍīśol] ভুরকুণ্ডীশোল ; [Tyanrāśol] ট্যানরাশোল ; [Kuṇḍāśol] কুণ্ডাশোল ; But the village names [Piṛārīśol] পিড়ারীশোল ; [Dheṅgāśol] ঢেঙ্গাশোল ; [Pheguyāśol] ফেগুয়াশোল are found in Bankura district. [Benāśuli] বেনাশুলি (Mid.) ; [Kolśuli] কোলশুলি (Mid., Ban.) ; [Ledāśuli] লেদাশুলি (Mid.) ; [Kucāśuli] কুচাশুলি (Mid.) ; [Kharikāśuli] খড়িকাশুলি (Mid.) ; [Beleśuli] বেলেশুলি (Bir.)

The place-names [Cāmuṇḍā] চামুণ্ডা, and [Gomuṇḍā] গোমুণ্ডা, preserve “Muṇḍā” which is an Austric word.

The names containing “Kol” কোল, “Kolā” কোলা are noticed in the different districts of Bengal.

Thus, [Haikol] হাইকোল (Far.) ; Marjatkol মর্জৎকোল (Far.) ; [Nātākol] নাটাকোল (Raj.) ; [Dhakraṅkol] ধকরাংকোল (Raj.) ; [Sāilkol] শাইলকোল (Din.) ; [Hidāskol] হিদাসকোল (Pab.) ;

[Uṣāikol] উষাইকোল (Pab.) ; [Dhāoyākol] ধাওয়াকোল (Bog.) ; [Dhāpākol] ধাপাকোল (Din.) ; [Nākol] নাকোল (Jes.) ; [Ulākol] উলাকোল (Jes.) ; [Bhāukol] ভাউকোল (24-P.) ; [Parāskol] পরাসকোল (Mur.) ; [Keoyākol] কেওয়াকোল (Mid.) ; [Keśekol] কেশেকোল (Ban.)

[Goṭkolā] গোটকোলা (Mid.) ; [Garārkolā] গরারকোলা (Mid.) ; [Leluyākolā] লেলুয়াকোলা (Mid.) ; [Begunkolā] বেগুনকোলা (Bur.) ; [Ātāikolā] আতাইকোলা (Pab.) ; [Āśokolā] আশোকোলা (Bog.) ; [Dumurkolā] ডুমুরকোলা (Mal.) ; [“Kol” কোল, or “Kolā” কোলা in the above place names, however, may have come from Sanskrit (i) “kroṣa” ক্রোড় neighbourhood, or (ii) “kulyā” কুল্যা, “channel, stream.”]

The word [bira] বির, which is found as prefix in the place-names of Bengal is Santali, meaning forest.

[Bira] বির “Forest” (Santali) *e.g.* ; [Birśimul] বিরশিমুল (Bur.) ; [Birkotā] বিরকোটা (Mid.) ; [Birbāndī] বিরবান্দী (Mid.) ; [Birjhariā] বিরঝরিয়া (Mid.) ; [Birmāśukā] বিরমাশুকা (Pab.) ; [Birguchinā] বিরগুছিনা (Mym.) ; [Birbakhurā] বিরবখুরা (Mym.) ; [Birbasuṇḍā] বিরবসুণ্ডা (Mym.) ; [Birgailā] বিরগইলা (Mym.)

The word [bār] বাড় is most probably of Austric origin. (*Cf.* Ho, barre.)

To cite some names : [Bār̥baliyā] বাড়বলিয়া (Mid.) [Bār̥beguniā] বাড়বেগুনিয়া (Mid.) ; [Bār̥bākrā] বাড়বাকড়া (Mid.) ; [Bār̥jaśuā] বাড়যশুয়া (Mid.) ; [Bār̥māthuri] বাড়মাথুরি (Mid.) ; [Bār̥bākrā] বাড়বাকড়া (Ban.).

Words “Co” চো or “Cu” চু (in many cases “Co” and “Cu” have been confused) meaning water, which are found in some place-names, are of Tibeto-Burman origin. Curiously enough, it is to be noted that the village-names ending in “Co” or “Cu” are found only in the district of Tipperah.

e.g., [Kālīāco] কালিয়াচো ; [Kālāco] কালাচো ; [Thośarico] ঠোশরিচো ; [Gārco] গারচো ; [Pāpāco] পাপাচো ; [Sānico] সানিচো ; [Rāñico] রাণীচো ; [Nārāco] নারাচো ; [Tīrco] তিরচো ; [Churico] ছুরিচো ; [Dārācu] দাড়াচু ; [Lārūcu] লাড়ুচু, etc.

A few names ending in “Cā” চা or “Ci” চি are also found in some districts of Bengal. It is quite likely that these words are also of Tibeto-Burman origin. [Tibetan word “Cā” means “things.”]

The following names may be cited :

[Sānāicā] সানাইচা (Tip.); [Bhābicā] ভাবিচা (Raj.); [Kurcā] কুরচা (Pab.); [Dahuci] ডাহুচি (Mal.); [Karicā] করিচা (Jes.); [Āocā] আওচা (Mur.); [Nāricā] নাড়িচা (Bur., Hug.); [Nimcā] নিমচা (Bur.); [Sāncā] শান্চা (Hug.); [Deocā] দেওচা (Ban.); [Baiñcā] বইচা (Nad.), etc.

Some place-names show duplication of the same word, *e.g.*, কোলকোল [Kolkol], বুদ্ধবুদ্ধ [Budbud], দমদম [Damdam], বজ্রবজ্র [Bajbaj], etc. These names are mostly of non-Aryan origin; their derivation is often obscure.

Many Perso-Arabic words are also found in the place-names of Bengal. Mahomedan rule over the greater part of India was responsible for this. The following cases may be discussed.

“Ābād” আবাদ (Persian) “Populated.” Names with “Ābād” আবাদ as their common final part are found almost in every district of Bengal.

As, [Isuābād] ইসুয়াবাদ [Mym.], [Nizāmābād] নিজামাবাদ (Mym.); [Isākābād] ইসাকাবাদ (Dac.); [Mansurābād] মনসুরাবাদ (Far.); [Jaharābād] জহরাবাদ (Bar.); [Hāidrābād] হাইদ্রাবাদ (Tip.); [Hāsnābād] হাসনাবাদ (Noa., 24-P.); [Āgrābād] আগ্রাবাদ (Chi.); [Jāhānābād] জাহানাবাদ (Raj., Bir.); [Elābābād] এলাহাবাদ (Mal.); Āraṅgābād] আরঙ্গাবাদ (Pab.); [Raṅgilābād] রঞ্জিলাবাদ (24-P.); [Jaynābād] জয়নাবাদ (Nad.); [Phakirābād] ফকিরাবাদ (Jes., Nad.); [Isuphābād] ইসুফাবাদ (Bur.); [Āminābād] আমিনাবাদ (Mur.); [Hosenābād] হোসেনাবাদ (Hug.); [Mediābād] মেদিয়াবাদ (Bir.); [Gairābād] গৈরাবাদ (Ban.); [Pāisābād] পাইসাবাদ (Ban.)

“Ārājī” আরাজী, cultivated land (Persian Irāzi).

[Ārājībāikhir] আরাজীবাইখির (Far.); [Ārājīboulali] আরাজী-বৌলতলি (Bar.); [Ārājīsirail] আরাজীসিরৈল (Raj.); [Ārājī-mānuṣmārā] আরাজীমানুষমারা (Ran.); [Ārājīsākoā] আরাজীসাকোয়া

(Jal.); [Ārājīdumuriā] আরাজীডুমুরিয়া (Khu.); [Ārājīmākar-
ḍhona] আরাজীমাকরডোন (Khu.); [Ārājīkaliman] আরাজীকলিমন
(Jes.); [Ārājīpunihār] আরাজীপুনিহার (Jes.); [Ārājīsāikuli]
আরাজীসাইকুলি (Mur.); [Ārājīnouāsi] আরাজীনওয়াসী (How.)

“Khānā” খানা (Persian Xana, place).

[Pilkhānā] পিলখানা (Bar., Mur.); [Khāgrākhānā] খাগড়া-
খানা (Bar.); [Komkhānā] কোমখানা (Nad.); [Meoākhānā]
মেওয়াখানা (Mur.); [Padumkhānā] পদুমখানা (Mid.); [Raut-
khānā] রাউতখানা (Hug.); [Huāngkhānā] হুয়াংখানা (Ban.).

“Khurd” খুর্দ found also as Khorl খোর্দ (Persian X’urd small).

[Khurdankijāni] খুর্দনকিজানি (Mym.); [Khurdjonāil] খুর্দ-
জোনাইল (Mym.); [Khurddublāsūr] খুর্দত্বলাসূর (Far.); [Khurd-
bāusa] খুর্দবাউসা (Raj.); [Khurdbāṭra] খুর্দবাটরা (Khu.); [Khurd-
maṇḍanabhog] খুর্দমণ্ডনভোগ (Jes.); [Khurdsingā] খুর্দসিঙ্গা (24-P.);
[Khurdbākhail] খুর্দবাখৈল (Nad.); [Khurdbiṭrā] খুর্দবিটরা (Bur.);
[Khurdbaherā] খুর্দবহেরা (Hug.).

“Jān” জান (contraction of the Persian word Zahan, world.)

Bagājan বগাজান (Mym.); [Poujān] পৌজান (Mym.); [Bān-
jān] বানজান (Far.); [Āmujān] আমুজান (Tip.); [Bāonjān] বাওন-
জান (Pab.); [Ghorjān] ঘোরজান (Pab.); [Sātjān] সাতজান (Hug.);
[Ghughujān] ঘুঘুজান (Ban.); [Goyāl jān] গোয়ালজান (Mur.).

Similarly place-names containing “Jānā” জানা or “Jāni(i)”
জানি, জানী as their final part are also found in every part of Bengal.

Thus, [Khāgarjānā] খাগরজানা (Mym.); [Ghuniājānā] ঘুনিয়া-
জানা (Mym.); [Phailjānā] ফৈলজানা (Pab.); [Bāgjānā] বাগজানা
(Bog.); [Gobarājānā] গোবরজানা (Mal.); [Khāgjānā] খাগজানা
(Mur.); [Dāmujānā] দামুজানা (Mid.).

[Gāglājāni] গাগলাজানি (Mym.); [Kāoāl jāni] কাওয়ালজানি
(Mym.); [Cāmārjāni] চামারজানি (Mym.); [Khalisājāni] খলিসা-
জানি (Dac.); [Ḍholjāni] ঢোলজানি (Far.); [Teṅgārjāni] টেঙ্গার-
জানি (Pab.); [Dabāijāni] দবাইজানি (Jal.); [Beljāni] বেলজানি
(Jes.); [Ruijāni] রুইজানি (Jes.); [Bāñsjāni] বাঁশজানি (How.).

“Ḍihi” ডিহি (Persian diḥ, populated land.)

[Ḍihipalāsan] ডিহিপলাসন (= Ḍihipalāsavana) (Bur.);
[Ḍihigumāi] ডিহিগুমাই (Mid.); [Daulatḍihi] দৌলতডিহি (Jes.);

[Kājlaḍihi] কাজলাডিহি (Bur.); [Pāthāṇḍihā] পাঠানডিহা (Mid.); [Uñcuḍihā] উঁচুডিহা (Mid.)

“Dari” দরি (Persian darra, passage.)

[Darimahiṣḍiyā] দরিমহিষদিয়া (Khu.); [Dariumājuri] দরিউমাজুরী (Khu.); [Darighātāi] দরিঘাটাই (Jes.); [Darisāldhā] দরিশালধা (Jes.); [Daricariākoṇā] দরিচরিয়াকোণা (Mym.); [Darikuṣṭhiā] দরিকুষ্টিয়া (Mym.); [Darikhokhāni] দরিখোজখানি (Dac.); [Daripadmabilā] দরিপদ্মবিলা (Far.); [Daribāhercar] দরিবাহেরচর (Bar.); [Dariharkū] দরিহরকী (Bir.).

(Cf. the village name Maruādari in Husaṅgābād district in C.P. Maruā is also an adjacent village.)

“Pil” পিল (Persian), “elephant”.

[Pilkuṇja] পিলকুঞ্জ (Bog); [Pilkbānā] পিলখানা (Mur.); [Pilkhaṇḍi] পিলখণ্ডি (Mur.); [Pilsoyā] পিলসোয়া (Bur.)

“Band” বন্দ (Persian) “boundary line of a field or river”.

[Baudhaorā] বন্দহাওড়া (Mym.); [Bandboulā] বন্দবওলা (Mym.); [Bandbetāl] বন্দবেতাল (Mym.); [Bandelaṅgī] বন্দএলঙ্গী (Mym.); [Bandāṅgāriyā] বন্দআঙ্গারিয়া (Dac.).

“Bājār” বাজার (Persian), “market”.

[Tejtaribājār] তেজতরিবাজার (Dac.); [Rājābājār] রাজাবাজার (Dac., Cal.); [Phiringībājār] ফিরিঙ্গীবাজার (Far.); [Katakabājār] কটকবাজার (Far.); [Magbājār] মগবাজার (Chi.); [Kaksabājār] কক্সবাজার (Chi.); [Āminībājār] আমিনীবাজার (Mur.); [Kumār-bājār] কুমারবাজার (Bur.)

“Bāg” বাগ, garden (Persian).

[Bāghātā] বাগহাটা (Mym.); [Bāgsātrā] বাগসাত্রা (Dac.); [Bāgbhāorā] বাগভাওরা (Pab.); [Bāgdokrā] বাগডোকরা (Ran.); [Bāgdol] বাগডোল (Mal.); [Bāgdāni] বাগদানী (Mid.); [Bāgpiculā] বাগপিচুলা (Mid.); [Bāgsinā] বাগসিনা (Bir.).

The following hybrid forms may also be marked in the place names of Bengal :

[Daulatpur] দৌলতপুর (Khu.); [Morelganj] মোডেলগঞ্জ; [Nayābād] নয়াবাদ (24-P.); [Dakṣiṇābād] দক্ষিণাবাদ (Ban.); [Mūlakhānā] মূলখানা (Jes.); [Candrakhāna] চন্দ্রখানা (How.); [Gourbājār] গৌরবাজার (Bur.); [Lālbājār] লালবাজার (Bur.);

[Sundarāḍihi] সুন্দরডিহি (Bir.); [Khurdapūrbapur] খুর্দঅপূর্বপুর (Hug.); [Khurdpalāsi] খুর্দপলাসী (Nad.); [Darikṣṇapur] দরিকৃষ্ণপুর (Far.); [Darisoma] দরিসোম (Dac.); [Bāgdaha] বাগদহ (24-P.); [Bāṇiyājān] বাণিয়াজান (Mym.), etc.

A few English words are also found in the place-names of Bengal; but such names are extremely few. As, Diamond Harbour, Canning, etc.

In at least one instance, a place-name originally from an English surname may have altogether lost its foreign appearance, viz., Cānak > Charnock.

Before analysing and classifying the place-names of Bengal, something must be said as regards their characteristics. Quite a number of them are Pan-Indian. These names are *tatsama* words ending in “Pura” পুর, “Nagara” নগর, “Grāma” গ্রাম, etc. Place-names containing certain Perso-Arabic words such as “Ābād” আবাদ, “Bāzār” বাজার are also Pan-Indian. Owing to parallel development in phonology, some names containing *tadbhava* words also appear Pan-Indian.

Bengal is predominantly a creation of the Ganges, the Damodar and the Brahmaputra and as such, rivers are very important factors in life in Bengal. Therefore place-names containing words connected with river, navigation, etc., are peculiarly restricted to Bengal. Thus, the following words feature largely in place-names either as prefixes or as suffixes which are found generally in the deltaic Bengal, i.e., in the districts of Jessore, Khulna, Barisal, Nadia and to some extent in 24-Parganas also (see Jaśohar-Khulnār Itihāsa, by Satis Chandra Mitra, Part I, pp. 25-40, 123-148).

Thus, [Diārā] দিয়ারা; [Dvigaṅgā] বিগঙ্গা; [Gāṅganī] গাঙ্গনী; [Trimohana] ত্রিমোহন; [Cāṇḍkhālī] চাঁদখালী; [Gadkhālī] গদখালী; [Khalisākhālī] খলিসাখালী; [Āstākhālī] আস্তাখালী; [Hāṛikhālī] হাড়িখালী; [Bāmankhālī] বামনখালী; [Sādhukhālī] সাধুখালী; [Maśākhālī] মশাখালী; [Jbāukhālī] জাউখালী; [Telikhālī] তেলীখালী; [Sātrākhālī] সাতরাখালী; [Sāgardohā] সাগরদোহা; [Sāgardārī] সাগরদাড়ী; [Dhānsāgar]

ধানসাগর; [Sukhsāgar] সুখসাগর; [Gopīsāgar] গোপীসাগর; [Nalghonā] নলঘোনা; [Nonāghonā] নোনাঘোনা; [Gourghonā] গৌরীঘোনা; [Māgurāghonā] মাগুরাঘোনা; [Śiyāghonā] শিয়ালঘোনা, etc.

For the same reasons, the names of various fishes occur in place-names, *e.g.*, [Kaikhālī] কৈখালী; [Kāṅkrākhālī] কাঁকড়াখালী; [Cinrākhālī] চিংড়াখালী; [Māgurkhālī] মাগুরখালী; [Khaliśākhālī] খলিশাখালী; [Pāṅgāskhālī] পান্ডাসখালী; [Iliśmāri] ইলিশমারি; [Icākbādā] ইচাখাদা; [Icakholā] ইচাখোলা; [Kaikhāni] কৈখানি; [Kātlākar] কাতলাকর; [Cāṇḍā] চাঁদা; [Cinrā] চিংড়া; [Tākipur] টাকিপুর; [Teṇrā] টেংড়া; [Teṇrālī] টেংরালি; [Puṇṭimāri] পুন্টিমারি; [Puṇṭiā] পুন্টিয়া; [Bāṭkemāri] বাটকেমারি; [Bāṭkedāngā] বাটকেডাঙ্গা; [Māgurādāngā] মাগুরাডাঙ্গা; [Māgurā] মাগুরা; [Boāliā] বোয়ালিয়া; [Bhetkiyā] ভেটকিয়া; [Ruijāni] রুইজানী; [Saluā] শলুয়া; [Sailkupā] শৈলকুপা; [Sailmāri] শৈলমারি; [Sīngā] শিঙা; [Sīngi] শিঙি; [Iliśpur] ইলিশপুর; [Kātlā] কাতলা; [Khalsī] খলসী; [Gajālmāri] গজালমারি; [Gajālīā] গজালিয়া; [Bātkāmāri] বাটকামারি; [Kāṅkrāmāri] কাঁকড়ামারি; [Bāṭikāmāri] বাটিকামারি; [Teṇrāmāri] টেংরামারি; [Gāgrāmāri] গাগরামারি; [Citalmāri] চিতলমারি; [Tāki] টাকি; [Tākipur] টাকিপুর; [Tākimāri] টাকিমারি; [Puṇṭi] পুন্টি; [Puṇṭikhālī] পুন্টিখালী; [Bāintalā] বাইনতলা; [Boāilmāri] বোয়াইলমারি; [Māchkhola] মাছখোলা; [Ichlābāzār] ইছলাবাজার, etc.

The Common Austric Substratum is responsible for inter-provincial (?) names containing repetition. Thus, we have: [Kolkol] কোলকোল (Bur); [Damdam] দমদম (24-P); [Bajbaj] বজবজ (24-P); [Budbud] বুদবুদ (Bur); [Śurśur] শুড়শুড় (Mid); [Ghanaghanā] ঘনঘনা (Mid); [Damdamā] দমদমা (Mym, Khu, Raj); [Dagdagā] দগদগা (Mym); [Dardarā] দরদরা (Mym); [Daldalā] দলদলা (Mym); [Bhinbhinā] ভিনভিনা (Bur); [Cikcikā] চিকচিকা (Ban); [Bharbharā] ভারভরা (Mym); [Birbirā] বিরবির (Mid); [Putputyā] পুতপুত্যা (Mid); [Kharkhariyā] খড়খড়িয়া (Mym, Tip); [Belbeliyā] বেলবেলিয়া (Mym); [Gargariyā] গরগরিয়া (Mym); [Jhanjhaniyā] ঝনঝনিয়া (Mym); [Dhandhaniyā] ঢনঢনিয়া (Mym);

[Cakcakiyā] চকচকিয়া (Mym); [Bhuṣbhuṣiyā] ভুষভুষিয়া (Mym); [Taṅṭaṅgiyā] টাঙটাঙ্গিয়া (Mym); [Jhaljhalīyā] ঝলঝলিয়া (Mym); [Khaskhasiyā] খসখসিয়া (Mym); [Bhurbhuriyā] ভুরভুরিয়া (Mym, Tip); [Malmaliyā] মলমলিয়া (Khu); [Durduriyā] দুরদুরিয়া (Khu); [Kalkaliyā] কলকলিয়া (Khu); [Gurguriyā] গুড়গুড়িয়া (Khu); [Ghunguniyā] ঘুনঘুনিয়া (Nad); [Balbaliyā] বলবলিয়া (24-P); [Dhandhaniyā] ধনধনিয়া (24-P); [Hulhuliyā] হলহলিয়া (Raj); [Ganganiyā] গনগনিয়া (Bur); [Thanṭhaniyā] ঠনঠনিয়া (Bog, Cal); [Halhaliyā] হলহলিয়া (Bog); [Keckeciyā] কেচকেচিয়া (Bir); [Gaṛgaṛiyā] গড়গড়িয়া (Mid); [Jaljalīyā] জলজলিয়া (Mid, Bir).

Besides, we have the following names :—

[Khunkhuni] খুনখুনি (Mym); [Bhurbhuri] ভুরভুরি (Mym); [Jāmjāmi] জামজামি (Nad); [Dhapdhapi] ধপধপি (24-P); [Kalkali] কলকলি (24-P); [Dulduli] ঢুলঢুলী (24-P); [Gaṛgaṛi] গড়গড়ি (Nad); [Dumdumi] ডুমডুমী (Ban); [Karkari] করকরি (Ban, Bir); [Cakcaki] চকচকী (Ban); [Daldali] দলদলি (Mal, Mid); [Jhum-jhumi] জুমঝুমি (Mid); [Hadhadī] হদহদী (Mid); [Jhaljhalī] ঝলঝলি (Mid); [Jaljalī] জলজলী (Mid); [Simiṣimi] শিমিশিমি (Bur); [Putpute] পুতপুতে (Mid).

Besides these reduplicated place-names, Onomatopoeic names are also found throughout Bengal, *e.g.*, [Dalbal] দলবল (Mym); [Dhāmdhām] ধামধাম (Jes); [Ghourdour] ঘোড়দৌড় (Bog); [Cucurmucur] চুচুরমুচুর (Jal); [Āaīrkāaīr] আঁইরকাঁইর (Tip); [Ākurtākur] আকুরটাকুর (Mym); [Birisiri] বিরিসিরি (Mym); [Hāsibāsi] হাসিবাসি (Mym); [Kukrimukri] কুকরিমুকরি (Bar); [Hilimili] হিলিমিলি (Chu); [Bāṭṭākī] বাটীটাকী (Mid); [Jhilimili] ঝিলিমিলি (Mid); [Dudhebude] দুধেবুদে (Mid); [Kelemele] কেলেমেলে (Ban).

When there are two prominent places with the same name, one is distinguished from the other in one of these ways.

When the places are far apart, the name of the nearest village is appended. Thus there are two Kṛṣṇanagaras in West Bengal. One is called Khānākul Kṛṣṇanagar, *i.e.*, Kṛṣṇanagar near the village Khānākul and the other is called Goārī Kṛṣṇanagar, *i.e.*, Kṛṣṇanagar near the village Goārī.

There are two Bālis (বালি), one in the district of Howrah situated on the right bank of the river Ganges, and the other in Hooghly District (in Police station Goghāṭ of the Ārāmbāg sub-division) on the right bank of the river Dvārakeśwar. To distinguish one from the other, Bāli in Hooghly is generally called Bāli-Dewanganj from a neighbouring village of that name and sometimes Bālihāṭ also from the fact that a big hāt is held in Dewanganj.

There are two Kalikātās (কলিকাতা), one in the district of 24-Parganas situated on the left bank of the river Hooghly and the other in Howrah district, situated on the northern bank of the river Dāmodara, about two and half miles off from the Police station Āmtā. To distinguish one from the other, [Kalikātā] কলিকাতা in Howrah is called “Rasapur-Kalikātā” রসপুর কলিকাতা or sometimes even as “Choṭa-Kalikātā” ছোট কলিকাতা [See, “Sāhitya Parishat Patrikā”, 1345 B.S. No. 1, “Kalikātā Nāmra Vyutpatti” by Prof. S. K. Chatterji].

Sometimes, however, distinctive words are added to the names. Thus, there are two Kalgāñs in Birbhum. One is called Car-Kalgāñ and the other Dās-Kalgāñ. Similarly, there are two Rāmpuras in Mymensingh. One is known as Gagdi Rāmpur and the other is known as Dalpā Rāmpur. The following names may be cited :—

[Bandsāknī] বন্দসাকনী, [Bilsāknī] বিলসাকনী (Mym); [Bāje-dudhkurā] বাজেদুধকুড়া, [Duyānīdudhkurā] দুয়ানীদুধকুড়া (Mym); [Rehāipalāstalā] রেহাইপলাশতলা, [Bādepalāstalā] বাদেপলাশতলা (Mym); [Karśākariāil] কর্শাকরিয়াইল, [Bādekariāil] বাদেকরিয়াইল (Mym); [Kadimkāgnā] কদিমকাগনা, [Bādekāgnā] বাদেকাগনা (Mym); [Rajakeiknī] রাজকেটিকনী, [Bṛcīknī] বৃটিকনী (Mym); [Koṇābinnā] কোণাবিন্না, [Bādebinnā] বাদেবিন্না (Mym); [Khod-karnasi] খোদকরনসি, [Cakkarnasi] চককরনসি (Mym); [Khās-cāndbayrā] খাসচান্দবয়রা, [Rehāicāndbayrā] রেহাইচান্দবয়রা (Mym); [Kasbāāṭiyā] কসবাআটীয়া, [Cālāāṭiyā] চালাআটীয়া (Mym); [Nijkalmohanā] নিজকলমোহনা, [Bādekalmohanā] বাদেকলমোহনা (Mym); [Barākālihar] বড়কালিহর, [Khurdkālihar] খুর্দকালিহর

(Mym); [Svalpa-āndāliyā] স্বল্পআন্দালিয়া, [Brāndāliyā] ব্রআন্দালিয়া (Mym); [Ārājīmālīpāṭan] আরাজীমালীপাটন, [Kismatmālīpāṭan] কিসমতমালীপাটন (Khu); [Khurdbākhail] খুর্দবাখৈল, [Bujruk bākhail] বুজরুক বাখৈল (Jes).

But if a river or a canal intervenes between the two places, one retains the name or takes up the adjective ghar (home) and the other takes up the adjective pār “trans”.

Thus, [Birhātā or Gharbirhātā] বিরহাটা, ঘরবিরহাটা, [Pār-birhātā] পার-বিরহাটা [*i.e.*, trans-Birhātā] (Bur).

But if the places are very near to each other, one retains the original name, while the other takes up one of the following adjectives such as “bār” (<bāhira) (outer), “bāje” বাজে (<bāhya) (outer), “bāde” বাদে, “br” ব্র, “svalpa” স্বল্প, “nij” নিজ, “kismat” কিসমত, “ārājī” আরাজী, “dari” দরি, “khurd” খুর্দ, “band” বন্দ, “khāmār” খামার, “darun” দরুণ, “bir” বির, etc.

The following instances may be noticed :—

[Kanurā] কনুরা, [Bādekanurā] বাদেকনুরা (Mym); [Ghonā-pārā] ঘোণাপাড়া, [Bādeghonāpārā] বাদেঘোণাপাড়া (Mym); [Hālāliyā] হালালিয়া, [Bādehālāliyā] বাদেহালালিয়া (Mym); [Digariā] দিগরিয়া, [Bādedigariā] বাদেদিগরিয়া (Hug); [Nābhāraṇ] নাভারণ, [Bādenābhāraṇ] বাদেনাভারণ (Jes); [Caṇḍihār] চণ্ডীহার [Bādecaṇḍihār] বাদেচণ্ডীহার (Mal); [Khāṭurā] খাটুরা [Bāde-khāṭurā] বাদেখাটুরা (24-P); [Jaśodal] যশোদল [Svalpajaśodal] স্বল্পযশোদল (Mym); [Siñjuri] শিংজুড়ি, [Svalpaśiñjuri] স্বল্পশিংজুড়ি (Dac); [Nāndiyārā] নান্দিয়ারা, [Svalpanāndiyārā] স্বল্পনান্দিয়ারা (Bar); [Bartali] বড়তলী, [Bājebartali] বাজেবড়তলী (Mym); [Baliyādi] বলিয়াদী, [Bājebaliādi] বাজেবলিয়াদী (Dac); [Silindā] সিলিন্দা, [Bājesilindā] বাজেসিলিন্দা (Raj); [Phukurā] ফুকুরা, [Bājephukurā] বাজেফুকুরা (Far); [Horā] হোরা, [Bāje-horā] বাজেহোরা (Tip); [Gopālpur] গোপালপুর, [Bājegopālpur] বাজেগোপালপুর (Mur); [Rasulpur] রসুলপুর, [Bājerasulpur] বাজে-রসুলপুর (Bur); [Bujung] বুজুং, [Bājebujung] বাজে বুজুং (Bir); [Bāmandaha] বামনদহ, [Bājebāmandaha] বাজেবামনদহ (Jes); [Caithaṭ] চৈথট, [Daricaithaṭ] দরিচৈথট (Mym); [Cariyākoṇā] চরিয়াকোণা, [Daricariyākoṇā] দরিচরিয়াকোণা (Mym); [Hāsil

হাসিল, [Darihāsil] দরিহাসিল (Mym); [Meiyā] মেইয়া, [Dari-meiyā] দরিমেইয়া (Mym); [Umājuri] উমাজুরী, [Dariumājuri] দরিউমাজুরী (Khu); [Sāldhā] শালধা, [Darisāldhā] দরিশালধা (Jes); [Harukī] হরুকী, [Darihharukī] দরিহরুকী (Bir); [Khojjāni] খোজজানি, [Darikhhojjāni] দরিখোজজানি (Dac); [Padmabilā] পদ্মবিলা, [Daripadmabilā] দরিপদ্মবিলা (Far); [Carākoṇā] চরাকোণা, [Bṛcarākoṇā] বৃচরাকোণা (Mym); [Cāpilā] চাপিলা, [Bṛcāpilā] বৃচাপিলা (Raj); [Boāliya] বোয়ালিয়া, [Bṛboāliya] বৃবোয়ালিয়া (Pab); [Kuṣṭhiyā] কুষ্টিয়া, [Bṛkuṣṭhiyā] বৃকুষ্টিয়া (Bog); [Hāclā] হাচলা, [Bṛhāclā] বৃহাচলা (Jes); [Sājiārā] সাজিআড়া, [Ārājisājiārā] আরাজীসাজিআড়া (Khu); [Punihār] পুনিহার, [Ārājīpunihār] আরাজীপুনিহার (Jes); [Kulgāchi] কুলগাছি, [Ārājī-kulgāchi] আরাজীকুলগাছি (Mur); [Pāikḍāngā] পাইকডাঙ্গা, [Ārājī-pāikḍāngā] আরাজীপাইকডাঙ্গা (How); [Bāikhir] বাইখির, [Ārājī-bāikhir] আরাজীবাইখির (Far); [Boultali] বৌলতলি, [Ārājī-boultali] আরাজীবৌলতলি (Bar); [Itākhola] ইটাখোলা, [Ārājī-itākhola] আরাজীইটাখোলা (Ran); [Sākoyā] শাকোয়া, [Ārājisākoā] আরাজীশাকোয়া (Jal); [Barabhāg] বড়ভাগ, [Kismatbarabhāg] কিসমত-বড়ভাগ (Mym); [Bāreṅgā] বারেন্গা, [Kismatbāreṅgā] কিসমতবারেন্গা (Mym); [Nānāiyā] নানাইয়া, [Kismatnānāiyā] কিসমতনানাইয়া (Dac); [Bibicini] বিবিচিনি, [Kismatbibicini] কিসমতবিবিচিনি (Bar); [Bāgurā] বাগুরা, [Kismatbāgurā] কিসমতবাগুরা (Raj); [Bārāikholā] বড়াইখোলা, [Kismatbārāikholā] কিসমতবড়াইখোলা (Ran); [Phultalā] ফুলতলা, [Kismatphultalā] কিসমতফুলতলা (Khu); [Ghorāgāchā] ঘোড়াগাছা, [Kismatghorāgāchā] কিসমতঘোড়াগাছা (Jes); [Simulbārī] শিমুলবাড়ী, [Kismatśimulbārī] কিসমতশিমুলবাড়ী (How); [Jonāil] জোনাইল, [Khurdjonāil] খুর্দজোনাইল (Mym); [Chātīān] চাতিয়ান, [Khurdchātīān] খুর্দচাতিয়ান (Dac); [Māgurā] মাগুরা, [Khurdmāgurā] খুর্দমাগুরা (Far); [Bākhail] বাখৈল, [Khurdbākhail] খুর্দবাখৈল (Nad); [Śingā] শিঙ্গা, [Khurdsīngā] খুর্দশিঙ্গা (24-P); [Gaḍjāil] গজাইল, [Khurdgaḍjāil] খুর্দগজাইল (Pab); [Baherā] বহেরা, [Khurdbaherā] খুর্দবহেরা (Hug); [Tulandar] তুলন্দর, [Nijtulandar] নিজতুলন্দর (Mym); [Bānāśuyā] বানাশুয়া, [Nijbānāśuyā] নিজবানাশুয়া (Tip); [Balālī] বলালী, [Nijbalālī] নিজবলালী (Bog); [Gaḍḍimārī] গড়িমারী, [Nijgaḍḍimārī] নিজগড়িমারী (Ran).

Besides these, we get the following pairs of names :—

[Jāmāṭī] জামাটী, [Baharjāmāṭī] বহরজামাটী (Mym); [Puṭṛiyā] পুটুরা [Porāpuṭṛiyā] পোড়াপুটুরা (Mym); [Pāṭulī] পাটুলী, [Āchīm-pāṭulī] অখিমপাটুলী (Mym); [Palāśīyā] পলাশিয়া, [Hiraṇpalāśīyā] হিরণপলাশিয়া (Mym); [Jhināi] যিনাই, [Rehāijhināi] রেহাইঝিনাই (Mym); [Bengrāil] বেংগ্রাইল [Beribengrāil] বেরীবেংগ্রাইল (Mym); [Kulohā] কলোহা, [Poyākalohā] পোয়াকলোহা (Mym); [Kāśar] কাশর, [Bhāṭikāsar] ভাটিকাশর (Mym); [Payārī] পয়ারী, [Darjipayārī] দর্জিপয়ারী (Mym); [Jāmāṭī] জামাটী, [Baharjāmāṭī] বহরজামাটী (Mym); [Bairāṭī] বৈরাটী, [Nasyabairāṭī] নস্যবৈরাটী (Mym); [Pāṭulī] পাটুলী, [Dulāpāṭulī] ঢুলাপাটুলী (Mym); [Deārā] দেয়াড়া, [Milkīdeārā] মিলকীদেয়াড়া (Khu); [Nāghoṣā] নাঘোষা, [Balāi-nāghoṣā] বলাইনাঘোষা (Jes).

When more than one village in a particular locality have a common name, they are differentiated from one another by the additions of epithets or by a combination of two names. The following types of names are found in Mymensingh district :—

Thus, [Kharsilā] খরসিলা, [Darikharsilā] দরিখরসিলা, and [Kadimkharsilā] কদিমখরসিলা; [Kātrā] কাত্রা, [Kismatkātrā] কিসমতকাত্রা, and [Bhānikātrā] ভানীকাত্রা; [Karnā] কর্ণা, [Svalpakarnā] স্বল্পকর্ণা, [Madhyakarnā] মধ্যকর্ণা; [Jalphai] জলফই, [Nagarjalphai] নগরজলফই, [Jagannāthjalphai] জগন্নাথজলফই; [Boulā] বোলা, [Kāṭboulā] কাটবোলা, and [Darikātboulā] দরিকোটবোলা; [Palāsiyā] পলাসিয়া, [Bandpalāsiyā] বন্দপলাসিয়া [Hiraṇpalāsiyā] হিরণপলাসিয়া; [Bājāil] বাজাইল, [Kālībājāil] কালী-বাজাইল, [Cakgarbājāil] চকগড়বাজাইল, and [Cāmārbājāil] চামার-বাজাইল; [Bāsiyā] বাসিয়া, [Bādebāsiyā] বাদেবাসিয়া, and [Dobāsiyā] দোবাসিয়া; [Pāruldiyā] পারুলদিয়া, [Birpāruldiyā] বিরপারুলদিয়া, [Svalpapāruldiyā] স্বল্পপারুলদিয়া; [Naohāṭā] নওহাটা, [Bṛnaohāṭā] ব্রনওহাটা, [Svalpanaohāṭā] স্বল্পনওহাটা; [Ḍoubākhola] ডৌহাখোলা, [Bṛḍoubākhola] ব্রডৌহাখোলা, [Kadimḍoubākhola] কদিমডৌহাখোলা, [Svalpaḍoubākhola] স্বল্পডৌহাখোলা, [Siñjānī] সিংজানী, [Khāmār-siñjānī] খামারসিংজানী, [Darugsinjānī] দরুগসিংজানী, [Rāmpur-siñjānī] রামপুরসিংজানী; [Pañcāśī] পাঁচাশী, [Bṛpañcāśī] ব্রপাঁচাশী, [Daripañcāśī] দরিপাঁচাশী, [Pārāpañcāśī] পাড়াপাঁচাশী; [Bhulsomā]

ভুলসোমা, [Khairatbhulsomā] খৈরতভুলসোমা, [Hātbbhulsomā] হাট-ভুলসোমা; [Ghāgrā] ঘাগড়া, [Bṛghāgrā] বৃঘাগড়া, and [Svalpa-gbhāgrā] স্বল্পঘাগড়া; [Baṛabhāg] বড়ভাগ, [Bṛbaṛabhāg] বৃবড়ভাগ, [Kismat baṛabhāg] কিসমতবড়ভাগ, [Svalpa baṛabhāg] স্বল্পবড়ভাগ; [Bānāil] বানাইল, [Bāhirbānāil] বাহিরবানাইল, [Nijbānāil] নিজ-বানাইল, [Uttarbānāil] উত্তরবানাইল; [Payāri] পয়ারী, [Darjjipayāri] দর্জিপয়ারী, [Sutiṣpayāri] সূতিয়াপয়ারী; [Bairāṭi] বৈরাটী, [Birbairāṭi] বিরবৈরাটী, [Darunbairāṭi] দরুণ বৈরাটী; [Masūa] মসূয়া, [Baṛamasūa] বড়মসূয়া, and [Brāhmaṇmasūa] ব্রাহ্মণমসূয়া.

The following names are found in Khulna and Jessore districts, *e.g.*, [Ājagarā] আজগড়া, [Rostamājagarā] রোস্তম-আজগড়া, [Bipraājagarā] বিপ্রআজগড়া, [Biriājagarā] বিরিআজগড়া (Khu); [Tetuliā] তেতুলিয়া, [Mitrātetuliā] মিত্রতেতুলিয়া, and [Brāhmaṇtetuliā] ব্রাহ্মণতেতুলিয়া (Khu); [Śrīkuṇḍi] শ্রীকুণ্ডি, [Ārājīśrīkuṇḍi] আরাজীশ্রীকুণ্ডি, [Bujrukśrīkuṇḍi] বুজরুক শ্রীকুণ্ডি.

CHAPTER III

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PLACE-NAMES

From the lists, we have seen that different locality specialises different types of names. Sometimes, many place-names with some common affix occur predominantly in one district only. Thus, the names with [Kāṭhi] কাঠি or [Kāṭhi] কাঠী (wood, forest) occur invariably in the deltaic Bengal, *viz.*, in the districts of Barisal, Khulna and Jessore, although a very few names are found sporadically in other parts of Bengal.

As, [Huludkāṭhi] হলুদকাঠি; [Ādamkāṭhi] আদমকাঠি; [Kulaskāṭhi] কলসকাঠি; [Sundarkāṭhi] সুন্দরকাঠি; [Madhurburkāṭhi] মধুরকাঠি; [Pāṭkāṭhi] পাটকাঠি; [Kājlākāṭhi] কাজলাকাঠি; [Saṅgiṭkāṭhi] সঙ্গীতকাঠি; [Siddhakāṭhi] সিদ্ধকাঠি; [Siyālkāṭhi] শিয়ালকাঠি; [Culkāṭhi] চুলকাঠি; [Ṭiyākāṭhi] টিয়াকাঠি; [Bibhīṣan-kāṭhi] বিভীষণকাঠি, and many others occur in Barisal district.

The village-names [Ātāikāṭhi] আতাইকাঠি; [Kāmāl-kāṭhi] কামালকাঠি; [Goutamkāṭhi] গৌতমকাঠি; [Tulākāṭhi] তুলাকাঠি; [Paitākāṭhi] পৈতাকাঠি; [Puṣpakāṭhi] পুষ্পকাঠি; [Samaskāṭhi] সমসকাঠি, etc., are found in Khulna district and [Brahmakāṭhi] ব্রহ্মকাঠি; [Suraśakāṭhi] সরসকাঠি; [Cūrāman-kāṭhi] চূড়ামনকাঠি; [Nrsiṅhakāṭhi] নৃসিংহকাঠি; [Sirājkāṭhi] সিরাজকাঠি, etc., occur in Jessore district.

The names of various fishes occurring in place-names are also found largely in the deltaic Bengal. To cite some very well-known names.

[Kaikhālī] কৈখালী (Khu); [Ciṭṭrākhālī] চিংড়াখালী (Khu); [Kāṅkrākhālī] কাঁকড়াখালী (Khu); [Teṅrākhālī] টেংরাখালী (Khu); [Ilismāri] ইলিসমারি (Khu); [Puṇṭimāri] পুঁটিমারি (Khu); [Cāṇḍā] চাঁদা (Khu); [Singi] শিংগি (Jes); [Kātlā] কাতলা (Jes); [Khalsī] খলসী (Jes); [Gajālmāri] গজালমারি (Jes); [Gajāliyā] গজালিয়া (Jes); [Boāliyā] বোয়ালিয়া (Jes); [Sailkūpā] শৈলকূপা (Jes), etc.

The vast majority of place-names ending in [Kāndā] কান্দা, [Kāndi] কান্দি (<Skandha, side, bank) generally occur in East and North Bengal, *e.g.*, [Bāolākāndā] বাওলাকান্দা (Mym); [Bekār-kāndā] বেকারকান্দা (Mym); [Bhetūyākāndā] ভেটুয়াকান্দা (Mym); [Ulukāndā] উলুকান্দা (Dac); [Kāolīkāndā] কাওলিকান্দা (Far); [Lemukāndā] লেমুকান্দা (Bar); [Hoglakāndā] হোগলাকান্দা (Tip); [Rāj-kāndā] রাজকান্দা (Bog); [Naikāndā] নৈকান্দা (Mal); [Mūl-kāndi] মূলকান্দি (Pab); [Soulākāndi] শৌলাকান্দি (Bog); [Tātār-kāndi] তাতারকান্দি (Mym); [Doulatkāndi] দৌলতকান্দি (Noa); [Dāokāndi] দাওকান্দি (Raj); [Hāitkāndi] হাইতকান্দি (Chi); [Bāluā-kāndi] বালুয়াকান্দি (Dac); [Pāṭhānkāndi] পাঠানকান্দি (Far); [Ceṅgākāndi] চেঙ্গাকান্দি (Bar); [Naluyākāndi] নলুয়াকান্দি (Tip).

A very few names are also found in the districts of Central and West Bengal. Thus, [Erokāndi] এড়োকান্দি (Jes); [Kāṭuyā-kāndi] কাটুয়াকান্দি (Jes); [Karātkāndi] করাতকান্দি (Nad); [Naphar-kāndi] নফরকান্দি (Nad); [Padamkāndi] পদমকান্দি (Mur); [Bāul-kāndi] বাউলকান্দি (Mid).

Names containing [Kāndar] কান্দর (inlets of rivers) as their common final element are found in North Bengal

Thus, [Gholkāndar] ঘোলকান্দর (Raj); [Cuniyākāndar] চুনিয়াকান্দর (Raj); [Nunākāndar] নুনাকান্দর (Raj); [Kālākāndar] কালাকান্দর (Raj); [Soṇākāndar] সোণাকান্দর (Pab); [Śāskāndar] শাসকান্দর (Ran); [Kālūkāndar] কালুকান্দর (Mal); [Kātlākāndar] কাতলাকান্দর (Mal); [Dhalākāndar] ধলাকান্দর (Mal); [Hāṭrā-kāndar] হাটরাকান্দর (Mal); [Jiyākāndar] জিয়াকান্দর (Mal), etc.

Place-names with [Kāhaniyā] কাহনিয়া (measure of agricultural produce) as their second part are seen only in the district of Mymensingh, *e.g.*, [Pāñcākāhaniyā] পাঁচকাহনিয়া; [Bāiskāhaniyā] বাইশকাহনিয়া; [Triškāhaniyā] ত্রিশকাহনিয়া; [Calliškāhaniyā] চল্লিশকাহনিয়া; [Bārakāhaniyā] বারকাহনিয়া; [Śaitkāhaniyā] সাইটকাহনিয়া; [Sātākāhaniyā] সাতকাহনিয়া; [Kurikāhaniyā] কুড়িকাহনিয়া, etc.

Names with [Kāchrā] কাছরা (<Kaksavāṭaka, neighbourhood) as their common final element are found in East Bengal.

Thus, [Paṇḍitkāchrā] পণ্ডিতকাছরা (Mym); [Khāmārkāchrā]

খামারকাছরা (Mym); [Arjjunkāchrā] অর্জুনকাছরা (Mym); [Bir-bandkāchrā] বিরবন্দকাছরা (Dac).

Names with the suffix [Kāi] কাই (<Kvātha) occur in East and North Bengal, *e.g.*, [Jhuikāi] জুইকাই (Mym); [Phuṭkāi] ফুটকাই (Mym); [Kāitkāi] কাইতকাই (Mym); [Tailkāi] তৈলকাই (Dac); [Jhujkāi] জুজকাই (Raj); [Sankāi] সনকাই (Mal).

Place-names with [Kānālī] কানালী (? channel) as their second parts occur in the districts of Midnapur and Bankura only, *e.g.*, [Kadamkānālī] কদমকানালী (Mid); [Mujrākānālī] মুজরাকানালী (Mid); [Rathukānālī] রথুকানালী (Mid); [Khayrākānālī] খয়রাকানালী (Ban); [Junkānālī] জুনকানালী (Ban); [Diyārkanālī] দিয়ারকানালী (Ban); [Jatīyākānālī] জটীয়ারকানালী (Ban).

Place-names ending in [Kundā] কুন্দা, [Kundi] কুন্দি or [Kondā] কোন্দা (high land) are found in West Bengal.

Thus, [Āilākundi] আইলাকুন্দি (Ban); [Emokundi] এমোকুন্দি (Ban); [Dumurkundi] ডুমুরকুন্দি (Ban); [Mujrākundi] মুজরাকুন্দি (Ban); [Mālkundā] মালকুন্দা (Mid); [Kāñkurkundā] কাঁকড়কুন্দা (Bur); [Āmākundā] আমাকুন্দা (Bur); [Chātākundā] ছাতাকুন্দা (Bur); [Nākrākondā] নাকরাকোন্দা (Bur); [Majrākundā] মজরাকুন্দা (Bir); [Bāndarkondā] বান্দরকোন্দা (Ban); [Nācankondā] নাচনকোন্দা (Ban); [Domkundā] ডোমকোন্দা (Ban), etc.

Place-names with [Kuṭi] কুটি and [Kundari] কুন্দরি are found in Midnapur district.

Thus, [Bāñskuṭi] বাঁশকুটি; [Kusumkuṭi] কুসুমকুটি; [Cīrakuṭi] চিড়াকুটি, etc. [Betkunduri] বেতকুন্দরি; [Nuniyākundari] নুনিয়াকুন্দরি, etc.

A few names ending in [Kend] কেন্দ (Kend fruit) occur in Bankura district only, *e.g.*, [Kasākend] কসাকেন্দ; [Dhēngākend] ডেঙ্গাকেন্দ; [Mocrākend] মোচড়াকেন্দ.

A few names ending in [Keśiā] কেশিয়া and [Kitā] কিতা are found in Burdwan district. Thus, [Uparakeśiyā] উপরকেশিয়া; [Nāmkeśiyā] নামকেশিয়া; [Mālkitā] মালকিতা; [Kāmārkītā] কামারকিতা.

Place-names with [Kair] কৈর as their common final element occur in East and North Bengal. Thus, [Kāliyākair] কালিয়াকৈর

(Dac); [Puyākair] পুয়াকৈর (Dac); [Louhākair] লৌহাকৈর (Dac); [Dulukair] দুলুকৈর (Far); [Cāñckair] চাঁচকৈর (Raj); [Pirākair] পিড়াকৈর (Raj); [Bāṇiyākair] বাণিয়াকৈর (Pab); [Kāliyākair] কালিয়াকৈর (Pab); [Mānikair] মানিকৈর (Pab).

Names ending in [Khāi] খাই generally occur in East and North Bengal. Thus, [Sagrākhāi] সগরাখাই (Mym); [Pāisākhāi] পাইসাখাই (Mym); [Corkhāi] চোরখাই (Mym); [Ulukhāi] উলুখাই (Mym); [Gacikhāi] গচিখাই (Mym); [Lāukhāi] লাউখাই (Mym); [Cāmārkhāi] চামারখাই (Dac); [Śālkhāi] শালখাই (Far); [Kānikhāi] কানীখাই (Bar); [Sorkhāi] সোরখাই (Raj); [Berākhāi] বেড়াখাই (Pab); [Asurakhāi] অসুরখাই (Ran).

Names with [Khāin] খাইন as their second part are only found in the districts of Noakhali and Chittagong. Thus we have, [Māmurkhāin] মামুরখাইন (Noa); [Hetīkhāin] হেটীখাইন (Noa); [Goraṅkhāin] গোরণখাইন (Chi); [Kaikhāin] কৈখাইন (Chi); [Karaṅkhāin] করণখাইন (Chi); [Bhāṭīkhāin] ভাটীখাইন (Chi); [Bārakhāin] বারখাইন (Chi); [Haraṅkhāin] হরিণখাইন (Chi).

A few names ending in [Khāñji] খাঁজি (the place in the mouth of two rivers) are found in Burdwan district only.

Thus, [Gopkhāñji] গোপখাঁজি; [Tikarkhāñji] টিকরখাঁজি (a settlement in the fold of a high land); [Barākhāñji] বরাখাঁজি.

Place-names with the suffix [Khānā] খানা (place, house) are found in Central and West Bengal, *e.g.*, [Mūlkhānā] মূলখানা; (Jes); [Komkhānā] কোমখানা (Nad); [Pilkhānā] পিলখানা (Mur); [Telikhānā] তেলিখানা (Mid); [Candrakhānā] চন্দ্রখানা (How); [Bāmankhānā] বামনখানা (Hug); [Huāṅkhānā] হুয়াংখানা (Ban); [Rāutkhānā] রাউতখানা (Hug, Ban).

Place-names containing [Khila] খিল (arid land) as their second part are found in East Bengal, *e.g.*, [Soṇārkhil] সোণারখিল (Dac); [Bhīmkhil] ভীমখিল (Far); [Caṇḍālkhil] চণ্ডালখিল (Tip); [Tāirkhil] টাইরখিল (Tip); [Mājirkhil] হাজিরখিল (Chi); [Bhāṭer-khil] ভাটেরখিল (Chi); [Miṭhārkhil] মিঠারখিল (Noa); [Āguānkhil] আগুয়ানখিল (Noa); [Nāhārkhil] নাহারখিল (Noa); [Hāsunkhilā] হাসুনখিলা (Dac); [Dehānkhilā] দেহানখিলা (Dac).

Names ending in [Khilā] খিলা are quite abundant in the district of Mymensingh. Thus, [Jānakīkhilā] জানকীখিলা; [Jaṅgalkhilā] জঙ্গলখিলা; [Ākbarkhilā] আকবরখিলা; [Uñcākhilā] উচাখিলা; [Bhurkhilā] ভুরখিলা; [Nijāmkhilā] নিজামখিলা; [Dāriyākhilā] দাড়িয়াখিলা; (Jājarkhilā) জাজরখিলা; [Sānandakhilā] সানন্দখিলা; [Hosenkhilā] হোসেনখিলা.

Village-names ending in [Khair] খৈর are found in North Bengal. Thus, [Corkhair] গোরখৈর (Raj); [Jhinākhair] যিনাখৈর (Raj); [Ghāṭkhair] ঘাটখৈর (Raj); [Khetkhair] খেতখৈর (Raj); [Candrakhair] চন্দ্রখৈর (Raj); [Haridrākhair] হরিদ্রাখৈর (Raj); [Beṭkhair] বেটখৈর (Bog); [Cāṭkhair] চাটখৈর (Bog); [Sankair] সনকৈর (Mal).

Names ending in [Khundā] খুন্দা, [Khupī] খুপী, [Khulī] খুলি and [Khuliyā] খুলিয়া are generally found in South-West Bengal. Thus, [Nekṛākhundā] নেকড়াখুন্দা (Mid); [Kusumkhundi] কুমুমখুন্দি (Ban); [Pāraikhupī] পারাইখুপী (Jes); [Kukurākhupī] কুকুরাখুপী (Mid); [Tetulkhulī] তেতুলখুলী (24-P); [Tilākhulī] তিলাখুলী (Mid); [Teliyākhulī] তেলিয়াখুলী (Mid); [Suvarṇakhulī] স্বর্ণখুলী (Hug); [Caṭrākhuliyā] চটরাখুলিয়া (Mid); [Cūṇkhuliyā] চূণখুলিয়া (Mid).

Names with the suffix [Gāi] গাই (<grāmika, belonging to a village) are generally found in Mymensingh district, e.g., [Tārāgāi] তারাগাই; [Jhāugāi] ঝাউগাই; [Cilāgāi] চিলাগাই; [Merigāi] মেরীগাই; [Ruṇigāi] রুণীগাই; [Chātugāi] ছাতুগাই, etc.

A large number of place-names with the endings [Gere] গেড়ে, [Geryā] গেড়া and [geriyā] গেড়িয়া are found in Midnapur district, e.g., [Belāgere] বেলাগেড়ে; [Goṭgere] গোটগেড়ে; [Kuñjagere] কুঞ্জগেড়ে; [Āknāgere] আকনাগেড়ে; [Tātigere] তাতীগেড়ে; [Solāgere] শোলাগেড়ে; [Homgere] হোমগেড়ে; [Piṇḍāgere] পিণ্ডাগেড়ে; [Sijgeriyā] সিজগেড়্যা; [Oecurgeriyā] চেকুরগেড়্যা; [Dhekargeriyā] ঢেকরগেড়্যা; [Tupligeriyā] টুপলীগেড়্যা; [Nilācigeriyā] নিলাচিগেড়্যা; [Kuṭusgeriyā] কুটুসগেড়্যা; [Nunanunigeriyā] নুননুনিগেড়্যা; [Hiñcāgeriyā] হিঞ্চাগেড়্যা; [Āngārgeriyā] আঙ্গারগেড়্যা; [Ceṅgnāgeriyā] চেন্গনাগেড়িয়া; [Paṛāśigeriyā] পড়াশিগেড়িয়া;

[Hiringeriyā] হিরিরগেড়িয়া; [Tasargeriyā] তসরগেড়িয়া;
 [Kāpāngeriyā] কাপাসগেড়িয়া; [Lāluyāgeriyā] লালুয়াগেড়িয়া;
 [Sūsunigeriyā] শুশুনিগেড়িয়া, etc.

Names containing [Godā] গোদা, [Goṭ] গোট and [Goṭhā] গোঠা as their second parts are found in West Bengal only. Thus, [Kharigodā] খড়িগোদা (24-P); [Phuṭigodā] ফুটিগোদা (24-P); [Jotgodā] জোতগোদা (Bur); [Kelegodā] কেলেগোদা (Mid); [Nār-godā] নারগোদা (Mid); [Jiyādārgoṭ] জিয়াদারগোট (24-P); [Mahiṣ-goṭ] মহিষগোট (Mid, How, Hug); [Gurigoṭ] গুড়িগোট (Mid); [Kādāgoṭ] কাদাগোট (Bank); [Mālgoṭhā] মালগোঠা (Mur).

Place-names with [Guri] গুড়ি, [Gurā] গুড়া, as their common final elements are generally found in North Bengal; and a few names with these endings are also met with in some districts of West Bengal. Thus, [Bhālāguri] ভালাগুড়ি (Ran); [Bairātiguri] বৈরাতিগুড়ি (Jal.); [Simulguri] শিমুলগুড়ি (Jal); [Binnāguri] বিন্নাগুড়ি (Jal); [Bāṭālīguri] বাটালীগুড়ি (Dar); [Māndālāguri] মান্দলাগুড়ি (Dar); [Poubāguri] পৌহাগুড়ি (Dar); [Maynāguri] ময়নাগুড়ি (Dar); [Dhāngurā] ধানগুড়া (Din); [Keu-guri] কেউগুড়ি (Bur); Bājnāguri] বাজনাগুড়ি (Mid); [Beliyāguri] বেলিয়াগুড়ি (Mid); [Nesrāguri] নেসরাগুড়ি (Hug); [Pāyrāguri] পায়রাগুড়ি (Bank); [Baharāgurā] বহরাগুড়া (Mid); [Āmlāgurā] আমলাগুড়া (Mid); [Kalsīgorā] কলসীগোড়া (Mid); [Kocāgorā] কোচাগোড়া (Mid); [Hāmārgorā] হামারগোড়া (Mid).

A few place-names ending in [Ghop] ঘোপ are found in Jessore district only. As [Cānduriārghop] চান্দুরিয়ারঘোপ; [Bibirghop] বিবিরঘোপ; [Hāriyārghop] হাড়িয়ারঘোপ; [Surārghop] শুড়ারঘোপ, etc.

Place-names having the suffix [Caṅg] চঙ্গ are found only in East Bengal, specially in the district of Tipperah. Thus, [Bāṇiyācaṅg] বাণিয়াচঙ্গ (Tip, Syl); [Bholācaṅg] ভোলাচঙ্গ (Tip); [Maincaṅg] মইনচঙ্গ (Tip); [Rāṇiyācaṅg] রাণিয়াচঙ্গ; [Phakirā-caṅg] ফকিরাচঙ্গ (Chi).

A few names ending in [Cāil] চাইল are found only in Tipperah district. Thus, [Dubācāil] ডুবাচাইল; [Dāmcaīl] দামচাইল; [Bāucaīl] বাউচাইল.

Place-names ending in [Cālā] ঢালা are generally found in the Dacca district. Thus, [Kūārcālā] কুয়ারচালা; [Gaṇak-cālā] গণকচালা; [Goyālcālā] গোয়ালচালা; [Habuārcālā] হবুয়ারচালা; [Berācālā] বেড়াচালা.

But a village [Louhācālā] লৌহাচালা is also found in Faridpur district.

Names ending in [Cāprā] চাপরা, [Cāpri] চাপরী, and [Cāpar] চাপর generally occur in East and North Bengal, although very few names ending in these words are found in West Bengal. As, [Nalcāprā] নলচাপরা (Mym); [Bhālukcāprā] ভালুকচাপরা (Mym); [Lāucāprā] লাউচাপরা (Mym); [Sailcāprā] শৈলচাপরা (Mym); [Kṣidricāprā] ক্ষিদ্রীচাপরা (Raj); [Māṇikcāprā] মাণিকচাপরা (Pab); [Māthāilcāpar] মাথাইলচাপর (Pab); [Kṣidra-cāpri] ক্ষিদ্রচাপরী (Pab).

Names with the common final elements [Cūrā] চূড়া and [Cīrā] চীরা are found in East Bengal. As, [Sāk-cūrā] শাকচূড়া (Mym); [Piṭhācūrā] পিঠাচূড়া (Mym); [Lobācūrā] লোবাচূড়া (Mym); [Bhūcūrā] ভূচূড়া (Far); [Louhācūrā] লৌহাচূড়া (Far); [Siṅgācūrā] সিঙ্গাচূড়া (Far); [Nalcīrā] নলচীরা (Mym); [Bārāi-cīrā] বারইচীরা (Mym, Tip); [Caṇḍālcīrā] চণ্ডালচীরা (Dac); [Kāmārcīrā] কামারচীরা (Bar).

Place-names with [Cuyā] চুয়া and [Cāṭi] চাটি as their common final parts are restricted only in the district of Midnapur. Thus, [Kākaricuyā] কাকরিচুয়া; [Bālicuyā] বালিচুয়া; [Naṭā-cuyā] নটাচুয়া; [Kāṭucuyā] কাটিচুয়া; [Bhālkācuyā] ভালকাচুয়া; (But a name Tārācuyā তারচুয়া is also found in Birbhum district.) [Āmlācāṭi] আমলাচাটি; [Khayrācāṭi] খয়রাচাটি; [Teuṭi-cāṭi] তেউটিচাটি; [Bulbulcāṭi] বুলবুলচাটি [Moulācāṭi] মৌলাচাটি; [Kharikācāṭi] খড়িকাচাটি; [Barāmcāṭi] বরামচাটি; [Bhururcāṭi] ভুরুরচাটি, etc.

Place-names with the suffixes “cu” চু or “co” চো (water) are found in the district of Tipperah only. Thus, [Kāliyāco] কালিয়াচো; [Kālāco] কালাচো; [Thośarico] ঠোশরি চো; [Pāpāco] পাপাচো; [Sānico] সানীচো; [Tirco] তিরচো; [Dārācu] দারাচু; [Lārūcu] লাড়ুচু, etc.

The vast majority of place-names with the endings [Jola] জোল and [Joli] জোলী (channel) are found in Central and West Bengal, although a few names occur in Maldah district of North Bengal. To cite some names, [Nārāyaṇjol] নারায়ণজোল (Khu); [Sinjol] শিংজোল (Jes); [Puñtījol] পুঁটিজোল (Mur); [Peruyā-jol] পেরুয়াজোল (How); [Gadādhārjol] গদাধরজোল (How); [Kāṅkrājol] কাঁকড়াজোল (How); [Laṅkājol] লঙ্কাজোল (Ban); [Dhobājola] ধোবাজোল (Bir); [Khārjoli] খারজোলী (Bur); [Taljoli] তলজোলী (Mid); [Soṇājoli] সোণাজোলী (Bir). But [Soṇājol] সোণাজোল, [Cāmārjol] চামারজোল, [Gājol] গাজোল are found in Maldah district.

A large number of names ending in [Ṭikrī] টিকরী and [Ṭikuri] টিকুরী (hill, hillock) are found in Central and West Bengal, although a few names occur sporadically in North Bengal.

Thus, [Soṇāṭikrī] সোণাটিকরী (Jes, Khu); [Kulṭikrī] কুলটিকরী (24-P); [Ulāstikrī] উলাসটিকরী (Bur); [Humṭikrī] হুমটিকরী (Mid); [Kāpāstikrī] কাপাসটিকরী (Mid, Bog); [Kulṭikrī] কুলটিকরী (How); [Nimṭikuri] নিমটিকুরী (Bir); [Nāmṭikrī] নামটিকরী (Mal); [Kāoyāṭikrī] কাওয়াটিকরী (Raj).

Most of the place-names ending in [Ṭeṅk] টেঁক, (sharp bend of a river) are found in Dacca and Faridpur districts, *e.g.*, [Kāṅkiārṭeṅk] কাঁকিয়ারটেঁক (Dac); [Bartulṭeṅk] বর্তুলটেঁক (Dac); [Gugiṭeṅk] গুগিটেঁক (Dac); [Gājirṭeṅk] গাজিরটেঁক (Far); [Bāksirṭeṅk] বাক্সিরটেঁক (Far).

A few names ending in [Ṭeṅgā] টেঙ্গা (high land) are found in Mymensingh district only. Thus, [Nijṭeṅgā] নিজটেঙ্গা; [Gridāṇṭeṅgā] গ্রিডানটেঙ্গা; [Jaṅgalṭeṅgā] জঙ্গলটেঙ্গা, etc.

The names with [Ṭāṇr] টাঁড় and [Ṭāṇḍ] টাণ্ড as their final parts occur only in Sāntal Pargana, Manbhūm, Hājāribāg, etc. Thus, [Karmāṭāṇr] কর্মাটাঁড়; [Sarmāṭāṇḍ] সরমাটাণ্ড, etc.

Many place-names with [Ḍihā] ডিহা, [Ḍihi] ডিহি or [Ḍi] ডি as their common second elements are found in Western and South-Western Bengal.

Thus, [Pāṭhāṇḍihā] পাঠানডিহা (Mid); [Bāmandihā] বামনডিহা (Bur); [Palāśḍihī] পলাশডিহি (Bur); [Mahulḍihī] মহুলডিহি (Mid); [Sāotāḍihā] সাওতালডিহা (Mid); [Kulḍi] কুলডি (Bur); [Māhutḍi] মাহুতডি (Bur); [Nunedi] নুনেডি (Bir); [Gopāḍi] গোপালডি (Ban); [Gohāḍi] গোহালডি (Mid); [Kulḍihā] কুলডিহা (Ban).

A few names ending in [Dagī] ডগী are found in Eastern and South-Eastern Bengal :

[Gimādagī] গিমাডগী (Bar); [Keorādagī] কেওড়াডগী (Bar); [Kumārḍagī] কুমারডগী (Tip); [Ābuyādagī] আবুয়াডগী (Noa); [Culḍagī] চুলডগী (Noa).

Some place-names with [Thol] থোল (<stara?) as their common final element occur in West Bengal only.

Thus, [Murgāthol] মর্গাথোল (Bur); [Jāmthol] জামথোল (Ban); [Bhurkunḍāthol] ভুরকুণ্ডাথোল (Ban); [Bhālukāthol] ভালুকাথোল (Ban).

A few names containing [Daṇḍi] দণ্ডী as their second part are found in Chittagong district only, *e.g.*, [Sobhandanḍi] শোভনদণ্ডী; [Ākupdanḍi] আকুপদণ্ডী; [Kokdanḍi] কোকদণ্ডী; [Hācandanḍi] হাচনদণ্ডী; [Couphaldanḍi] চৌফলদণ্ডী.

Place-names with [Dala] দল and [Donā] দোনা (<drona, measure of land) as their common final parts are found in East Bengal.

Thus, [Jagadal] জগদল (Mym); [Jaśodal] যশোদল (Mym); [Baradal] বড়দল (Dac); [Pāṭdal] পাটদল (Far); [Hārdal] হারদল (Bar); [Pāñcedonā] পাঁচদোনা (Dac); [Cāirdonā] চাইরদোনা (Dac); [Daśdonā] দশদোনা (Dac, Tip); [Tridonā] ত্রিদোনা (Tip); [Couddadona] চৌদ্দদোনা (Tip).

A few names with the suffix [Dan] দন are found only in Midnapur district :

[Cilādan] চিলাদন; [Cāmṭādan] চামটাঁদন; [Ukhrādan] উখরাঁদন; [Gobrādan] গোবরাঁদন; [Jogīdan] যোগীদন.

Place-names with [Dārī] দাড়ী and [Dohā] দোহা as their common final elements are found in Central and West Bengal :

[Āgardārī] আগরদাড়ী (Khu); [Sāgardārī] সাগরদাড়ী (Khu,

Jes, Mid); [Gholdārī] খোলদাড়ী (Nad); [Jhāudārī] ঝাউদাড়ী (24-P); [Nārādārī] নারাদাড়ী (Mid); [Dharādohā] ধরাদোহা (Khu); [Lāudohā] লাউদোহা (Bur); [Rājdoḥā] রাজদোহা (Ban); [Kumir-dohā] কুমিরদোহা (Ban).

A large number of place-names with the suffix “di” দি or “di” দী are found in East Bengal, specially in the district of Dacca, though a few names occur in some districts of Central and West Bengal. Thus, [Āngiādī] আঙ্গিয়াদি (Mym); [Barādī] বরাদী (Mym); [Sekhdī] সেখদী (Mym); [Pāikdī] পাইকদী (Mym); [Kaṭiyādī] কটিয়াদী (Mym); [Dhāmdī] ধামদী (Mym); [Kuśdī] কুশদী (Dac); [Jinārdī] জিনারদী (Dac); [Kāuyādī] কাউয়াদী (Dac); [Tātirdī] তাতিরদী (Dac); [Bāṇiyādī] বাণিয়াদী (Dac); [Leṅgardī] লেঙ্গরদী (Dac); [Naldī] নলদী (Dac); [Temdī] টেমদী (Dac); [Lāsārdī] লাসারদী (Dac); [Khāmārdī] খামারদী (Dac); [Āmardī] আমরদী (Far); [Siyāldī] শিয়ালদী (Far); [Khāgdī] খাগদী (Far); [Nikhurdī] নিখুরদী (Far); [Daldī] দলদী (Bar); [Dhandī] ধনদী (Bar); [Bārādī] বারদী (Bar); [Bāghadī] বাঘাদী (Bar). Besides, a few names are also found in Khulna, Jessore, Nadia, 24-Parganas and Midnapur districts.

Place-names with [Nān] নান, [Nāla] নাল, [Nālā] নালা and [Nālī] নালী (channel) as their common second parts occur in West Bengal only. Thus, [Nainān] নৈনান (24-P); [Mainān] মৈনান (How); [Bāgnān] বাগনান (How); [Kāknān] কাকনান (Hug); [Pāunān] পাউনান (Hug); [Kāknālā] কাকনালা (Bur); [Dignālā] দিগনালা (Bur); [Mucinālā] মুচিনালা (Mid); [Bākīnālā] বাকীনালা (Mid); [Parākānālī] পড়াকানালী (Mid), etc.

A few names ending in [Pālaṅ] পালাং are found in Chittagong district only :

[Uhālāpālaṅ] উহালাপালাং; [Jāliyāpālaṅ] জালিয়াপালাং; [Dhoyā-pālaṅ] ধোয়াপালাং; [Dhecuyāpālaṅ] ধেচুয়াপালাং.

A few place-names ending in [Puṭ] পুট are found in Midnapur district only :

[Āmadpuṭ] আমদপুট; [Cecurāpuṭ] চেচুড়াপুট; [Birāmpuṭ] বিরামপুট; [Bāghāpuṭ] বাঘাপুট.

Place-names with [Potā] পোতা and [Pola] পোল as their common final elements are found in Central and West Bengal.

Thus, [Bārapotā] বারপোতা; [Dhanpotā] ধনপোতা (Khu); [Sāmukpotā] শামুকপোতা (24-P); [Ādampotā] আদমপোতা (Nad); [Kāṭrāpotā] কাটিরাপোতা (Bur); [Ghonāpotā] ঘোনাপোতা (Mid); [Koraṅgāpotā] কোরঙ্গাপোতা (Mid); [Itāpotā] ইটাপোতা (How); [Hediyāpotā] হেদিয়াপোতা (Hug); [Borajpotā] বোরজপোতা (Ban); [Piplāpol] পিপলাপোল (Khu); [Āltāpol] আলতাপোল (Jes); [Mocpol] মোচপোল (24-P); [Satyapol] সতাপোল (Nad); [Gurepol] গুড়িপোল (How); [Bāgātāpol] বাগাতাপোল (Ban).

Names of villages ending in [Pāsā] পাশা (<pārśvaka) generally occur in East and Central Bengal. Thus, the following villages may be cited :—

[Araṇyapāsā] অরণ্যপাশা (Mym); [Jaypāsā] জয়পাশা (Mym); [Deopāsā] দেওপাশা (Mym); [Budhpāsā] বুধপাশা (Mym); [Tārpāsā] তারপাশা (Far); [Rārhipāsā] রাঢ়ীপাশা (Far); [Badarpāsā] বদরপাশা (Far); [Kārttikpāsā] কার্ত্তিকপাশা (Bar); [Cuṅgāpāsā] চুঙ্গাপাশা (Bar); [Muṇḍapāsā] মুণ্ডপাশা (Bar); [Maheśvarpāsā] মহেশ্বরপাশা (Khu); [Joginīpāsā] যোগিনীপাশা (Khu); [Ichāpāsā] ইছাপাশা (Jes); [Siddhipāsā] সিদ্ধিপাশা (Jes); [Lakṣmīpāsā] লক্ষ্মীপাশা (24-P).

Names ending in [Bār] বাড় are found in Midnapur district only. Thus, [Kalasbār] কলসবাড়; [Āgarbār] আগরবাড়; [Jāhānābār] জাহানাবাড়; [Khātuyābār] খাটুয়াবাড়; [Mathurībār] মথুরীবাড়; [Sinnibār] সিনিবাড়, etc.

A large number of place-names with the suffix “bo” বো are restricted in Dacca district only.

Thus, [Āmrābo] আমড়াবো; [Belābo] বেলাবো; [Kāmrābo] কামরাবো; [Caitārbo] চৈতারবো; [Ledārbo] লেডারবো; [Tengābo] টেঙ্গাবো; [Tārābo] তারাবো; [Tilābo] তিলাবো; [Pālābo] পালাবো, etc.

Most of the place-names ending in [Bherā] ভেড়া, [Bherī] ভেড়ী, [Bhola] ভোল and [Bholā] ভোলা are found in Midnapur district only.

Thus, [Bāgābherā] বাগাভেড়া; [Āndhārīābherā] আন্ধারিয়াভেড়া; [Cātrībherā] চাত্রীভেড়া; [Keśyābherī] কেশ্যভেড়ী; [Sānbherī] সানভেড়ী; [Lejībherī] লেজীভেড়ী; [Kāśiyābhol] কাশিয়াভোল; [Kapatībhol] কপতিভোল; [Keśebholā] কেশেভোলা; [Tukuru-bholā] টুকুরুভোলা.

Place-names containing [Sail] শৈল, [San] সন and [Sanā] সনা as their final parts generally occur in North Bengal.

Thus, [Bāghśail] বাঘশৈল (Raj); [Gurumśail] গুরুমশৈল (Raj); [Tulāsan] তুলাসন (Raj); [Pipulsan] পিপুলসন (Raj); [Kāmārsan] কামারসন (Pab); [Bhālāsan] ভালাসন (Bog); [Kāṭāsan] কাটাसन (Din); [Tilāsan] তিলাসন (Mal), etc.

Names containing the suffixes [Sai] সাই and [Sini] সিনী (<vasini) are found in Midnapur district only. As, [Kanakāsai] কনকাসাই; [Bāmunsai] বামুনসাই; [Dāgarsai] ডাগরসাই; [Derāṅsai] দেরাংসাই; [Ārāsini] আড়াসিনী; [Nikursini] নিকুরসিনী; [Kulāsini] কুলাসিনী, etc.

The vast majority of place-names with [Sol] শোল, and [Suli] শুলি (channel), as their common final parts are found in Burdwan, Midnapur and Bankura district only. Thus, [Āsānsol] আসানশোল (Bur); [Śiyārsol] শিয়ারশোল (Bur); [Benāsol] বেনাশোল (Bur); [Bāghuyāsol] বাঘুয়াশোল (Mid); [Nāurāsol] নাউরাশোল (Mid); [Bengāisōl] বেঙ্গাইশোল (Mid); [Hātiāsol] হাতিয়াশোল (Mid); [Kuñcisōl] কুঁচিশোল (Ban); [Rāṅgāsol] রাঙ্গাশোল (Ban); [Kharikāśuli] খড়িকাশুলি (Ban); [Kucāśuli] কুচাশুলি (Mid); [Benāśuli] বেনাশুলি (Mid), etc.

Place-names containing [Rol] রোল as their common final element are found in West Bengal, e.g., [Nirol] নিরোল (Bur); [Pirol] তিরোল (Hug); [Kāñkrol] কাঁকরোল (How); [Sukārol] সুকারোল (Mid); [Kāñrārol] কাঁড়ারোল (Mid); [Ikrol] ইকরোল (Mur).

CHAPTER IV

CLASSIFICATION OF PLACE-NAMES

The place-names in Bengal can be discussed mainly from two viewpoints :—

(1) Semantic, (2) Morphological.

(1) Viewed semantically, place-names may be either of (a) popular origin or (b) learned origin.

(a) Place-names which are of popular origin are mainly descriptive in some very salient features and often inherited from remote antiquity, so that the actual form of words is well-nigh lost and the meaning becomes obscure.

Descriptive place-names may belong to any of the following types :—

(i) Descriptive of the original geographical situation or environment.

(ii) Descriptive of old reminiscences as regards original extent or commercial activity or any historical incident.

(iii) Descriptive of an important landmark.

(iv) Descriptive of the caste or profession, etc., of inhabitants.

(b) Place-names which are more sophisticated ; often these learned names are eulogistic with a conscious aim at elegance.

Eulogistic place-names may fall under any of the following types :—

(i) Purely eulogistic.

(ii) Names of local deities.

(iii) Names of deities.

(iv) Names of prominent local persons.

(v) Names of plants, flowers and other objects.

(2) Viewed morphologically place-names may be included in the following types :—

(A) Simple.

(B) Compounds.

(C) Besides simple and compound names, we have a large mass of disguised compounds, the resolution of which is one of the greatest problems in Indian Linguistics.

(A) Simple names may be arranged in the following divisions :—

(i) Aryan (*i.e.*, names, which are purely Sanskritic).

(ii) Non-Aryan, with a sub-division of (a) single, (b) reduplicated.

(iii) Doubtful.

(iv) Names which are apparently single words.

The names under items (ii) and (iii) present the greatest difficulty in solving properly in the light of modern phonetics. In many cases, names which are not of Aryan origin are exceedingly difficult, sometimes impossible with the present stage of our knowledge, to account for.

(B) Compound place-names may be arranged in the following manner :—

(i) Names with common initial elements (*i.e.*, common first part or prefix).

These names may be sub-divided into (a) numerals and (b) others.

The names under item (b) may again be sub-divided into (1) *Tatsama* (2) *Semi-tatsama* (3) *Tadbhava* (4) *Perso-Arabic* (5) *Desi* and (6) *Doubtful*.

(ii) Names with common final or second elements (*i.e.*, names with a common word as the second part). These names may fall under the following heads :—

(1) *Tatsama* (2) *Semi-tatsama* (3) *Tadbhava* (4) *Perso-Arabic* (5) *Desi* (6) *Doubtful*.

(iii) Names with a common suffix.

(iv) Names which are apparently single words.

(v) Hybrid names.

(C) Disguised compounds may be either (a) modern or (b) early.

SEMANTIC : (a) POPULAR DESIGN

(i) *Descriptive of the original geographical situation or environment*

[Ārāpās] আড়াপাশ (= Ārāpārśā) “near a field” (Mym); [Kāṇḍapās] কাণ্ডপাশ (= Kāṇḍapārśva) “near the root (of a tree)” (Bar); [Banapās] বনপাশ (= Banapārśva) “near a forest” (Bur); [Sundarban] সুন্দরবন “the forest of Sundarī trees”; [Cākḍaha] চাকদহ (= Cakrahraḍa) “round lake” (Mym, Khu, Jes);

[Phulḍaha] ফুলদহ (= Phullahraḍa) (see page 32) “flower lake” (Mym); [Ghoṛāḍaha] ঘোড়াদহ (= Ghoṭakahraḍa) “horse pool” (Far, Pab); [Kālāḍaha] কালাদহ (= Kālāhraḍa) “black lake” (Mym); [Kalāḍaha] কলাদহ (= Kadalīhraḍa) “plantain lake” (Mym); [Beldaha] (Bilvāhraḍa) বেলদহ “wood-apple lake” (Mym); [Dhandaha] ধনদহ (= Dhanāhraḍa) “treasure lake” (Raj); [Dharmāḍaha] ধর্মদহ (= Darmāhraḍa) “pious lake” (Din, Jes); [Āṅgāḍaha] আঙ্গারদহ (= Āṅgāhraḍa) “charcoal lake” (Khu, Jes); [Muktāḍaha] মুক্তাদহ (= Mukṭāhraḍa) “pearl lake” (Jes); [Soṇāḍaha] সোণাদহ (= Svarṇāhraḍa) “gold lake” (Jes, Ban);

[Kanyāḍaha] কন্যাদহ (= Kanyāhraḍa) “daughter lake” (Jes); [Madhūḍaha] মধুদহ (= Madhuhraḍa) “honeylake” (Jes); [Guṛḍaha] গুড়দহ (= Guṛāhraḍa) “Sweet-lake” (Jes, 24-P); [Tāmbulḍaha] তাম্বুলদহ (= Tāmbulāhraḍa) “betel-leaf lake” (24-P); [Kālīḍaha] কালীদহ (= Kālīhraḍa) “black lake” (24-P, Bir); [Siyāḍaha] শিয়ালদহ (= Sīvāhraḍa) “jackal pool” (24-P); [Eñṛēḍaha] ঐড়ৈদহ (= Aṇḍīāhraḍa) “bullock lake” (24P); [Khaṛḍaha] খড়দহ “fuel or straw lake” (24-P); [Ghīḍaha] ঘিদহ (= Ghṛtāḍaha) “ghee lake” (Bir); [Tālḍaha] তালদহ (= Tālāhraḍa) “palm lake” (Hug); [Nīmḍaha] নিমদহ (= Nimbāhraḍa) “neem lake” (Bur); [Bālidīyā] বালিদিয়া (= Bālidīvīpa) “sand

island" (Mym); [Candandiyā] চন্দনদিয়া (= Candanadvīpa) "sandal island" (Dac); [Manohardiyā] মনোহরদিয়া (= Manoharadvīpa) "beautiful lake" (Far); [Bāhirdiyā] বাহিরদিয়া (= Bāhiradvīpa) "outlying island" (Far, Khu); [Pakṣīdiya] পক্ষীদিয়া (= Pakṣīdvīpa) "bird island" (Tip); [Ālokdiya] আলোকদিয়া (= Ālokdadvīpa) "a shining island" (Tip, Noa); [Māijdiya] মাইজদিয়া (= Madhyadvīpa) "middle island" (Nad); [Gaṅgādiya] গঙ্গাদিয়া (= Gaṅgādvīpa) "the island formed by the river Ganges" (Pab); [Śubhadiya] শুভদিয়া (= Śubhadvīpa) "auspicious island" (Khu); [Kāūdiya] কাউদিয়া (= Kākadvīpa) "crow island" (Jes); [Rūpdiya] রূপদিয়া (= Rūpadvīpa) "beautiful island" (Jes); [Haldiya] হলদিয়া (= Haladvīpa) "ploughing island" (Mid); [Hijaldi] হিজলদি (= Hijaladvīpa) "an island containing Hijala trees" (Khu); [Naldi] নলদি (= Naladvīpa) "reed island" (Jes); [Siyāldi] শিয়ালদি (= Sīvadvīpa) "jackal Island" (Jes); [Gāṅgdi] গাঙ্গদি (= Gaṅgādvīpa) "an island formed by the river Ganges" (Nad); [Tāldi] তালদি (= Tāladvīpa) "an island of palm trees" (24-P); [Haldi] হলদি (= Haladvīpa) "ploughing island" (Mur, Bur, Ban); [Bārdi] বড়দি (= Bāradvīpa) "big island"; [Beldi] বেলদি (= Bilvadvīpa) "wood-apple island" (Mym); [Bāñiādi] বাণিয়াদি "island of Bāñiyās" (Dac).

[Phuldi] ফুলদি (= Phulladvīpa) "flower island" (Mym); [Barādi] বরাদী (= ? Bāradvīpa) "big island" (Mym); [Kuśadi] কুশদি (= Kuśadvīpa) "Kuśa island" (Dac); [Khāgdi] খাগদি (= Khāgadvīpa) "straw island" (Far); [Dhandi] ধনদি (= Dhanadvīpa) "treasure island" (Bar); [Dharmadi] ধর্মদি (= Dharmadvīpa) "pious island" (Bar); [Bāradi] বারদি (= Dvadaśa dvīpa) "twelve islands" (Bar); [Gāṅgpur] গাঙ্গপুর "the town on the Ganges or a river"; [Dvīgaṅgā] দ্বিগঙ্গা "two rivers" (*i.e.*, a place bounded by two rivers); [Gāṅginī] গাঙ্গিনী "a village on the side of a river"; [Trivenī] ত্রিবেণী "three streams" (*i.e.*, where the three rivers namely Ganges, Jamunā and Sarasvatī meet); [Dīārā] দিয়াড়া (= Dvīpa vāṭaka) "a settlement on an island" (Khu, Mym); [Barākar] বরাকর "a village

situated on the river Barākar" (Bur); [Jaśohar] যশোহর, the name is probably connected with the Arabic word "jasar" which means bridge.

"The name of Jasar, the bridge, shows the nature of the country, which is completely intersected by deep water course" (Cunningham's ancient Geography).

[Rājākhālī] রাজাখালী "a khāl or canal belonging to a king" (Bar, Chi); [Māchuākhālī] মাছুয়াখালী "a canal belonging to fish-vendors" (Bar); [Teṅgrākhālī] টেংরাখালী "a canal of Teṅrā fish" (Khu); [Noākhālī] নোয়াখালী "new channel" (Noa); [Māgurkhālī] মাগুরখালী "a canal of Māgura fish" (Khu, Jes); [Khalisākhālī] খলিসাখালী "a canal of Khalisā fish" (Khu); [Kaikhālī] কৈখালী "a canal of Kai fish" (Jes); [Ciṅrākhālī] চিংড়াখালী "a canal of Ciṅrā fish" (Khu); [Pāṅgāskhālī] পাঙ্গাসখালী "a canal of Pāṅgās fish" (Khu, 24-P); [Bāmankhālī] বামনখালী "a canal belonging to Brahmins" (Jes); [Sādhukhālī] সাধুখালী "a canal belonging to saints" (Jes); [Corkhālī] চোরখালী "a canal belonging to thieves" (Jes); [Cūṇākhālī] চুণাখালী "lime-quarry"; [Kuśadvīpa] কুশদ্বীপ "Kuśa island" (Mur); [Navadvīpa] নবদ্বীপ "nine or new islands" (Nad); [Agradvīpa] অগ্রদ্বীপ "front island" (situated on the Bhāgīrathī) (Bur); [Sāgaradīghi] সাগরদীঘি "a village where a big tank exists" (Mym, Dac, Mur); [Kotāldīghi] কোতালদীঘি "a tank belonging to Koṭṭapālas" (Ban); [Pāhārgorā] পাহাড়গোড়া "foot hill"; [Pāhārtalī] পাহাড়তলী "foot hill" (Chi); [Gaṛerpāhār] গড়েরপাহাড় "Forthill" (Mur); [Simulguṛi] শিমুলগুড়ি "foot of a Simula tree" (Jal); [Tetulguṛi] তেতুলগুড়ি "foot of a tamarind tree" (Dar); [Dīghirpār] দীঘিরপার "bank of a tank" (Mym, Dac); [Daherpār] দহেরপার "bank of a lake" (Mym); [Khālpār] খালপার "bank of a canal" (Far); [Pukurpār] পুকুরপার "bank of a tank" (Far); [Carghāt] চরঘাট "landing or bathing place"; [Carpārā] চরপাড়া "a settlement on *char* land" (Mym); [Carśaṅkar] চরশঙ্কর "a village on a *char* land named after one Saṅkara" (Dac); [Bhitargar] ভিতরগড় "inner fort" (Hug); [Deoghar] দেওঘর (=Devaghar)

“the abode of a god” (Mym); [Deobhog] দেওভোগ (= Deva-bhog) (Pab); [Naiḥāṭi] নৈহাটি (= Nadīhaṭṭikā) “a market-place on a river” (Nad, Mym); [Dehāṭi] দেহাটি (= Dvipahaṭṭikā) “a market-place on an island” (Nad); [Gāṅghāṭi] গাঙ্গহাটি (= Gaṅgāhaṭṭikā) “a market-place on the Ganges” (Pab); [Naokholā] নওখোলা “new field” (Mym); [Naopārā] নওপাড়া “new village or quarter” (Mym); [Naogañō] নওগাঁও “new village” (Mym); [Nayābārī] নয়াবাড়ী “new house” (Mym); [Nayānagar] নয়ানগর “new town” (Mym); [Hāṭbārī] হাটবাড়ী “the market-place or house” (Mym); [Hāṭhājārī] হাটহাজারী “the bāṭ or market-place of thousand men”.

(ii) *Descriptive of old reminiscences as regards original extent or commercial activity or any historical incident*

[Mogalmāri] মোগলমারি “the village where the Moghals were routed” (Bur, Mid); [Bāghmāri] বাঘমারি “the village where a tiger was killed” (Ban, 24-P, Mid); [Hātīmāri] হাতীমারি “the place where an elephant was killed” (Mal); [Mahiṣmāri] মহিষমারি “the village where a buffalo was killed” (Mym); [Bhālukumāri] ভালুকমারি “the village where a bear was killed” (Mid); [Mānuṣmāri] মানুষমারি “the village where a man was killed (Mid); [Bāmunmāri] বামুনমারি “the village where a Brahmin was killed” (Mid).

There are cases which can be taken to be both descriptive and eulogistic. Thus [Hātikāṇḍā] হাতীকান্ধা, [Ghorāmārā] ঘোড়ামার, [Kumirmārā] কুমিরমার, etc.

But such names as [Bāghmārā] বাঘমার, [Bāghmāri] বাঘমারি, [Bherāmārā] ভেড়ামার, [Sāpmārā] সাপমার, [Kukurmārā] কুকুরমার, [Bhūtmārā] ভূতমার, [Hāṁsmāri] হাঁসমারি, [Pāṭhāmārā] পাঠামার, etc., are really descriptive names bearing reminiscences of past incidents.

[Jāhājimārā] জাহাজমার “a place where a ship was ruined” (Noa); [Tīrmārā] তীরমার “a place where a battle took place” (Dac). But the names [Tegmārā] টেংরামারি (Khu), [Solmāri]

শোলমারি (Khu), [Puñṭimāri] পুন্টিমারি (Khu, Jes), [Iliśmāri] ইলিশমারি (Khu), [Kātlāmāri] কাতলামারি (Mur, Nad), [Cāñdāmāri] চাঁদামারি (Mur), [Kāñkrāmāri] কাঁকড়ামারি (Mur), etc., are generally connected with the rivers and the places were famous for the various kinds of fish as shown in the above names.

[Piljaṅg] পিলজঙ্গ (= Pil, elephant + jaṅg, war), i.e., “the village where war-elephants were kept” (Khu); [Iṭākhalā] ইটখলা “the place where bricks were made” (Mym, Syl); [Aṣṭagrām] অষ্টগ্রাম “a village containing the homesteads of cultivators of some eight revenue survey villages” (Mym); [Aṣṭadhār] অষ্টধার “a village containing eight edges” (Mym); [Āṭpārā] আটপাড়া “a village containing eight houses or quarters” (Mym); [Āṭghar] আটঘর “a village where eight families lived” (Far); [Āṭghariyā] আটঘরিয়া “a village where eight families lived” (Mym, Raj); [Āṭgharā] আটঘরা “a village where eight families lived” (Bur, Jes, Hug); [Āṭhāzār] আটহাজার “a village containing eight thousand bighās of land” (Bar);

[Āṭbhāg] আটভাগ “a village containing eight divisions”; [Āṭjuṛi] আটজুড়ী “a village containing eight pairs of houses” (Khu); [Āṭbāṭi] আটবাটি “a village containing eight houses” (Mid); [Āṭhārabāṛi] আঠারবাড়ী “a village containing eighteen houses” (Mym); [Āṭhārapotā] আঠারপোতা “a village containing eighteen posts” (Mym); [Āṭhārajoṛā] আঠারজোড়া “a village containing eighteen pairs of houses” (Mid); [Cāripārā] চারিপাড়া “a village containing four settlements” (Mym); [Cauddaghar] চৌদ্দঘর “a village containing fourteen settlements” (Mym); [Daśagrām] দশগ্রাম “a village comprising fourteen settlements” (Mid); [Daśadrona] দশদ্রোণ “a village containing ten droṇas of land” (Mur); [Daśhāzār] দশহাজার “a village containing ten thousand bighās of land” (Far); [Teragāti] তেরগাতি “a village containing thirteen settlements” (Mym); [Terabāri] তেরবাড়ী “a village where thirteen families lived” (Mym); [Teradoṇā] (where doṇā = droṇa) তেরদোনা “a village comprising thirteen droṇas of land” (Dac); [Terakāni] তেরকানি “a village containing thirteen kānis of land” (Bar); [Satarabāri] সতরবাড়ী “a village containing seventeen

houses" (Mym); [Satgāño] (= Saptagrāma) সাতগাঁও "a village comprising seven settlements" (Tip); [Sātpārā] সাতপাড়া "a village containing seven quarters" (Dac); [Chaygāño] ছয়গাঁও "a village having six settlements" (Mym, Far); [Chaysatī] ছয়শতী "a village containing some six hundred bighās of land" (Mym); [Chayduṇa] (where duṇa = droṇa) ছয়দুহন "a village containing six droṇas of land" (Mym); [Chayghariā] ছয়ঘরিয়া "a village containing six houses" (Tip); [Bārabhāg] বারবাঘ "a village having twelve divisions" (Khu); [Bārapārā] বারপাড়া "a village comprising twelve quarters" (Khu); [Bārahāzār] বারহাজার "a village containing twelve thousand bighās of land" (Bar); [Bāraghar] বারঘর "a village where twelve families lived" (Mym); [Pāñopārā] পাঁচপাড়া "a village having five quarters" (Tip, Noa); [Pāñcbhāg] পাঁচভাগ "a village containing five divisions" (Mym); [Pāñcgharā] পাঁচঘরা "a village having five houses" (Bur); [Pāñcdeulī] পাঁচদেউলী "a village containing five temples" (Bur).

(iii) *Descriptive of an important landmark*

[Kalāgāchiā] কলাগাছিয়া "containing plantain plants" (Mym); [Phulgāchiā] ফুলগাছিয়া "containing flower plants" (Far); [Āmrāgāchiā] আমড়াগাছিয়া "containing āmrā trees" (Bar); [Belgāchiā] বেলগাছিয়া "containing bilva trees" (24-P); [Tāl-gāchiā] তালগাছিয়া "containing palm trees" (Bar); [Gābgāchiā] গাবগাছিয়া "containing gāba trees" (Bar); [Palāsgāchi] পলাশগাছি "containing palāśa trees" (Mal); [Guāgāchi] গুয়াগাছি "containing nut trees" (Bog, Din); [Tālgāchi] তালগাছি "containing palm trees" (Raj); [Belgāchi] বেলগাছি "containing bilva trees" (How, Nad); [Śimulgāchi] শিমুলগাছি "containing śimula trees" (Nad); [Kāñthālgāchi] কাঁঠালগাছি "containing jack-fruit trees" (Bur); [Kulgāchi] কুলগাছি "containing palm trees" (Mur); [Nimtalā] নিমতলা "foot of a nimba tree" (Mym); [Nārikeltalā] নারিকেলতলা "foot of a cocoanut tree" (Mym); [Guātalā] গুয়াতলা "foot of a nut tree" (Mym); [Palāśtalā] পলাশতলা "foot of a palāśa tree" (Mym); [Phultalā] ফুলতলা "foot of a flower plant" (Mym);

[Āmlitalā] আমলিতলা “foot of a tamarind tree” (Mym); [Baṭṭalā] বাটতলা “foot of a baṭa tree” (Mym); [Haritakitalā] হরিতকীতলা “foot of a haritakī tree” (Mym); [Jārāitalā] (jārai = jārula) জারইতলা “foot of a jārula tree” (Mym); [Tāltalā] তালতলা “foot of a palm tree” (Dac, Khu); [Śimūtalā] শিমূলতলা “foot of a śimula tree” (Dac); [Soṇātalā] সোণাতলা “foot of a soṇā tree or plant” (Dac, Bar, How); [Candantalā] চন্দনতলা “foot of a sandal tree” (Far); [Khājurtalā] খাজুরতলা “foot of a date-palm tree” (Bar); [Kāpāśtalā] কাপাশতলা “foot of a cotton-plant”; [Tetaitalā] তেতৈতলা (Tetai = Tetula) “foot of a tamarind tree” (Tip); [Kadamtala] কদমতলা “foot of a kadamba tree” (Khu); [Gābtalā] গাবতলা “foot of a gāba tree” (Khu); [Bakūtalā] বকুলতলা “foot of a bakula tree” (Khu); [Ghilātalā] ঘিলাতলা “foot of a ghilā tree” (Khu); [Cānpātalā] চাঁপাতলা “foot of a cānpa flower plant” (Jes); [Śrīphātalā] শ্রীফলতলা “foot of a śrīphala tree” (Jes); [Hijātalā] হিজলতলা “foot of a hijala tree” (Jes); [Khayertalā] খয়েরতলা “foot of a khadira tree” (Jes); [Dumurtalā] ডুমুরতলা “foot of a ḍumbura tree” (Jes); [Chātiyāntalā] ছাতিয়ানতলা “foot of a chātiyān tree” (Jes); [Āmtalā] আমতলা “foot of a mango tree” (How, Mym); [Kūtalā] কুলতলা “foot of a palm tree” (Hug) [Cakdīghi] চকদীঘি “containing a square tank” (Dac); [Nājir-dīghi] নাজিরদীঘি “containing a tank made by one Nājir” (Dac).

[Bāmūnpukur] বামুনপুকুর “containing a tank made by a Brahmin” (Bur); [Padmapukur] পদ্মপুকুর “containing a tank of lotus” (24-P); [Ruipukur] রুইপুকুর “containing a tank of Rui fish” (Nad); [Candanpukur] চন্দনপুকুর “containing a tank with a sandal tree near it” [Belpukur] বেলপুকুর “containing a tank with a bilva tree near it” (Din); [Tetulpukur] তেতুলপুকুর “containing a tank with a tamarind tree near it” (Raj); [Nonāpukur] নোনাপুকুর “containing a salt tank” (Mal); [Kāmār-pukur] কামারপুকুর “containing a tank made by smiths” (Hug).

(iv) *Descriptive of the Caste or Profession of the Inhabitants*

[Kulingrām] কুলিনগ্রাম “the village inhabited by kulins” (Bur); [Pāṭhāngrām] পাঠানগ্রাম “the village inhabited by

Pāthāns" (Bur); [Brāhmaṅgrām] ব্রাহ্মগ্রাম "the village inhabited by Brahmins" (Hug); [Rudragrām] রুদ্রগ্রাম "the village inhabited by Rudras" (Mym); [Kājīgrām] কাজীগ্রাম "the village inhabited by Kājis" (Mym); [Kocgrām] কোচগ্রাম "the village inhabited by Koches" (Din); [Rāutgrām] রাউতগ্রাম "the village inhabited by Rāuts" (Din); [Kāmārgāñ] কামারগাঁও "the village inhabited by smiths" (Dac, Far, Mym); [Caṇḍālgāñ] চণ্ডালগাঁও "the village inhabited by Caṇḍālas" (Mym); [Kāhetgāñ] কাহেতগাঁও "the village inhabited by Kāyasthas" (Mym); [Rājārgāñ] রাজারগাঁও "the village of a king" (Tip); [Ghoṣgāñ] ঘোষগাঁও "the village of cowherds" (Mym); [Dāsergāñ] দাসেরগাঁও "the village inhabited by people with the surname of Dāsa" (Mym); [Nāgergāñ] নাগেরগাঁও "the village inhabited by people with the surname of Nāga" (Mym); [Bāmunpārā] বামুনপাড়া "the settlement of Brahmins" (a very common name in West Bengal); [Jogīpārā] যোগীপাড়া "the settlement of Jogis" (Jes); [Bāruipārā] বারুইপাড়া "the settlement of betel-nut growers" (Khu, 24-P); [Bhadrapārā] ভদ্রপাড়া "the settlement of higher class people" (How); [Pāṇḍāpārā] পাণ্ডাপাড়া "the settlement of Pāṇḍās" (Mym); [Brahmaṅpārā] ব্রাহ্মণপাড়া "the settlement of Brahmins" (Mym, Din); [Go-yālpārā] গোয়ালপাড়া "the settlement of cowherds" (Bar); [Rājāpārā] রাজাপাড়া "a village inhabited by a king" (Bar); [Mollāpārā] মোল্লাপাড়া "the settlement of Mollas" (Din); [Bhātpārā] ভাটপাড়া "the settlement of Bhaṭṭas" (Dac, 24-P); [Bhaṭṭācāryyapārā] ভট্টাচার্য্যপাড়া "the village inhabited by people with the surname of Bhaṭṭācāryya" (Mym); [Goṅsāipārā] গৌসাইপাড়া "a village inhabited by people with the surname of Gosvāmīs" (Mym); [Kāyasthapalli] কাযস্থপল্লী "the village of Kāyasthas" (Mym); [Purohitpur] পুরোহিতপুর "the city of priests" (Khu); [Brāhmaṅpur] ব্রাহ্মণপুর "the city of Brahmins" (Nad); [Goṅsāipur] গৌসাইপুর "the city of Gosvāmīs" (Mym); [Jogībārī] যোগীবাড়ী "the house of yogīs" (Mym); [Baidyabārī] বৈদ্যবাড়ী "the house of Baidyas" (Mym); [Rājgañj] রাজগঞ্জ "the market-town of a king" (Mym); [Goṅsāigañj] গৌসাইগঞ্জ "the market-town of Gosvāmīs" (Mym); [Kumārgañj] কুমারগঞ্জ "the market-town of potters" (Bur).

SEMANTIC : LEARNED ORIGIN

(i) *Purely Eulogistic*

[Goās] গোয়াস (= Gopavāsa) “the abode of Gopas” (Khu);
 [Dhāmās] ধামাস (= Dharmavāsa) “the abode of Dharma” (Bur);
 [Caṇḍiās] চণ্ডীআস (= Caṇḍivāsa) “the abode of Caṇḍī” (Mid).

[Siṅgās] সিঙ্গাস (= Siṅhavāsa) “the lair of a lion”; [Indās] ইন্দাস (= Indravāsa) “the abode of Indra” (Bir, Ban); [Deoās] দেওআস (= Devavāsa) “the abode of a god” (Bir);

[Kāgās] কাগাস (= Kākavāsa) “the nest or roost of a crow” (Bir);

[Tārās] তারাস (= Taṭavāsa) “a settlement on a river-bank” (Pab); [Dhoās] ধোয়াস (= Dhopāvāsa) “the house of a washerman” (Raj); [Jaugāñ] জৌগাঁ (= Jatugrāma) “the village of lac” (Bur);

[Mougāñ] মৌগাঁ (= Madhugrāma) “the village of honey”.

(ii) *Names of Local Deities*

[Bhadreśvara] ভদ্রেশ্বর (Hug); [Tārakeśvara] তারকেশ্বর (Hug);
 [Bakreśvara] বক্রেশ্বর (Bir); [Mantreśvara] মন্ত্রেশ্বর (Bur); [Kapi-
 leśvara] কপিলেশ্বর (24-P); [Mukteśvara] মুক্তেশ্বর (Mid); [Dvār-
 bāsinī] দ্বারবাসিনী (Hug); [Kālīghāt] কালীঘাট (Cal); [Gopīnāth-
 bāṭī] গোপীনাথবাটি (Mym); [Dakṣiṇeśvara] দক্ষিণেশ্বর (24-P), etc.

(iii) *Names of villages beginning with the names of deities*

To this sub-division must belong the numerous names of gods such as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Durgā, Śiva, Hari, Kālī, Lakṣmī, etc.

Thus, [Rāmpur] রামপুর (Mym); [Durgāpur] দুর্গাপুর (Mym);
 [Kṛṣṇapur] কৃষ্ণপুর (Tip, Mym); [Govardhanpur] গোবর্দনপুর
 (Mid); [Jagannāthpur] জগন্নাথপুর (Syl); [Janārdanpur]
 জনার্দনপুর (Mid); [Durgāpur] দুর্গাপুর (Far, Raj); [Durgābārī]
 দুর্গাবাড়ী (Mym); [Kālībārī] কালীবাড়ী (Mym); [Viṣṇupur] বিষ্ণুপুর
 (Mym), etc.

(iv) *Names of villages celebrating prominent local persons*

Thus, [Arjjunpur] অর্জুনপুর (Mur); [Ānandapur] আনন্দ-পুর (Mid); [Ābdulpur] আবদুলপুর (Raj); [Hemnagar] হেমনগর (Mym); [Pratāpnagar] প্রতাপনগর (Khu); [Prasannagañj] প্রসন্নগঞ্জ (Fad); [Selimābād] সেলিমাবাদ (Far); [Rāmeśvargañj] রামেশ্বরগঞ্জ (Mym), etc.

(v) *Names of plants, flowers and other objects*

Names of plants and flowers have exerted a considerable influence on the formation of place-names. A large number of place-names in Bengal and other provinces in India, originated from names connected with trees, plants, flowers, etc.

Thus we find, [Śasā] শশা (Mym); (Mukhī) মুখী (Mym); [Jalphai] জলফাই (Mym); [Bet] বেত (Mym); [Paṭal] পটল (Mym); [Kāñṭhāl] কাঁঠাল (Mym); [Gaṣur] গাছুর (Tip); [Jagaḍumbur] জগড়মুর (Bog); [Bayrā] বয়ড়া (Raj); [Belī] বেলী (Khu); [Śrī-phalā] শ্রীফলা (Jes); [Singrā] সিংড়া (Jes); [Arbarā] অরবড়া (Mal); [Leṅgra] লেংড়া (Raj); [Gandhabādulī] গন্ধবাহুলী (=present-day Gāndhāle, গাঁধালে) (4-P); [Bāblā] বাবলা (Bur); [Dumur] ডুমুর (Bur); [Āmrā] আমড়া (Bur); [Jāgul] জাগুল (Bur, Mid);

[Pitānāu] পিতানৌ (nāu < alāhu) (Mid); (Pitā is a very common word in the Oriya language and is used in the sense of bitter; it is quite likely that the word has come from Sanskrit pitta, although it may be a variant of the word titā < tikta, which is a case of dissimilation).

[Khāgrā] খাগড়া (Mid);

[Soṇāmukhī] সোণামুখী (Mid).

Besides these, we find many more names which have undergone various phonological changes in a curious manner, through the influence of local dialects, and, as such, it is rather difficult to give any philological interpretation of these names, unless further materials are coming to light. The compound and disguised compound names will be treated later on.

WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM

NOVELIST AND STORY-TELLER

A STUDY

BY
NITISH KUMAR BASU

CHAPTER I

POPULARITY AND THE INTELLIGENTSIA

It is admittedly a difficult task to pronounce any opinion on an author who does not belong to one's own country. It is only natural for us to look out for the light coming from the compatriots of the author. We recognise a saint by his aureole. We are afraid in fact of passing an independent judgment. No wonder that there are people who take Maugham to be only a writer of pot-boilers. They judge him from the prevailing critical attitude towards him in England, which is not very flattering. The critics have not made disparaging remarks about him; they have done what is worse, they have ignored him. In a big volume of the history of English literature, if Maugham is noticed at all, he does not get more than a few lines.

It is not that he has no popularity; indeed there can be no question about his popularity. His latest novel *Theatre* (1937) was reprinted thrice in one year. Five of his plays were simultaneously represented on the stage

in London in 1907. "I saw the lot," says Sir John Squire, "and often wonder why that most ingenious and roaring funny play, *Jack Straw*, is never revived."¹ And Sir John Squire echoes what the British public thinks of Maugham's plays. But unfortunately Maugham lost by his popularity the good opinion of the intelligentsia. "I have no illusion about my literary position," said Maugham in 1938, "there are but two important critics in England who have taken me seriously."²

The attitude of the critics however is variable ; at one time the theory of art for art held sway and the critics accepted it as the basis of their literary appraisal. But the critical view has since changed and the critics mostly now follow the doctrine of Bernard Shaw, that "the man, who says art for art's sake, is a fool." Maugham thinks that it is from this point of view that the intelligentsia look down upon the popular plays he has written. Maugham had certainly catered to the public "who wanted to laugh or enjoy a theme of love, or to feel for death and be awed by the destiny of man." Maugham's defence of his materials and methods is worth consideration. "If I had continued to write plays as bitter as *A Man of Honour* or as sardonic as *Loaves and Fishes*, I should never have been given the opportunity of producing certain pieces to which not even the most severe have refused praise."³ But the impression once produced is very difficult to remove. It is very unfortunate, since this has also prevented the critics from looking into Maugham's novels seriously.

Maugham's remarks on this attitude of the critics may seem a little pungent but they are nevertheless very shrewd :

The elect sneers at popularity. They are inclined even to assert that it is a proof of mediocrity ; but they forget that posterity makes its choice

¹ *Illustrated London News*, Feb., 12, 1938

² *The Summing Up*.

³ *Ibid.*

not from among the unknown writers of a period, but from the known..... It may be that posterity may scrap all the best-sellers of our day, but it is among them that it must choose.¹

It is only in the distant future that the verdict of the people and that of the intelligentsia meet. It reminds one of the mathematical truth of parallel straight lines meeting at infinity. It is a notorious truth; contemporary verdicts of the people and of 'the elect' are seldom the same.

It is not very difficult for us to guess why Maugham is not held in very high esteem by the English critics. Maugham suggests delicately that the reason lies in the lack of the spirit of propaganda in his work.² He does not go much deeper than this. The real reason however lies elsewhere. It will be a mistake to think that the English critics of to-day ignore all writers who are not propagandists. There are writers who are not propagandists and yet are not ignored. When we go deeply into the cause of their popularity with the intelligentsia we cannot but suspect that generally it is something novel, something very striking and bold either in form or in contents that claims the attention of the critics. It is only natural to be more easily attracted by a bold colour than by a mild one. When the critics praise James Joyce or Virginia Woolf, they do that because they are awed by the immense daring of their experiments. The boldness of D. H. Lawrence forces their eyes on to him. It is some dazzling colour or other that marks them out from their contemporaries, which attracts the critics and makes them appreciate their genius in other respects. Somerset Maugham has no such distinguishing colour. He has not attempted any innovation in form. He has not drawn the critics' attention to the psychological subtleties in his work by displaying a bold indecency like that in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. He has not even

¹ *Cakes and Ale*.

² *The Summing Up*.

the spirit of propaganda which is the easiest means now of attracting the attention of the critics. Maugham has no doubt pointed out some inherent diseases of society but on account of his peculiar philosophy, as we shall see later, he has not been able to make such propaganda his only aim, as Bernard Shaw has done. He takes life to be a " painted veil " and for him to set about earnestly to reform society, is ridiculous. We shall see later that the reformer is not altogether absent from his novels and short stories but that is so hidden under his fascinating power of story-telling that the critics, used to the blunt cudgelling of Bernard Shaw and his school, fail to take that seriously. .

The fact remains that very few critics believe that Maugham will be remembered, say, fifty years hence, or that he will try against the big names of the day " the question with the posterity. " But one should not be surprised if the laurel be placed on his head by a discerning posterity. Maugham does not show an unjustified vanity when he issues the challenge :

The history of criticism is there to show that contemporary criticism is fallible.

—*The Summing Up.*

CHAPTER II

THE SOIL AND THE SEED

In the year 1884, at the age of ten, Somerset Maugham came to settle in England and be educated like an English boy. His father, perhaps "drawn by some such restlessness for the unknown as has consumed his son, went to Paris and became solicitor to the British Embassy."¹ His mother was a beautiful woman, he informs us, and his parents were known as "Beauty and the Beast" in the Paris of that time. She was probably a woman of character and perhaps she had some talent; she wrote some novels in French and composed the music for some drawing room ballads. When Maugham lost both of them—his mother at eight and his father at ten—he came to England and his uncle and guardian, the Vicar of Whitstable, sent him to a preparatory school, an annexe of the King's school. "I have never forgotten the roar of laughter that abashed me when in my preparatory school I read out the phrase 'unstable as water' as though unstable rhymed with Dunstable,"² he says. The fact was that he was educated as a French boy. In Paris he had a French nurse and had been to a French school. French became practically his mother tongue; he refers in his autobiography to an incident of his childhood; seeing a horse out of a railway window, he had cried out in French. After he had been taken away from the French school, he used to have lessons under a clergyman at the church attached to the Embassy. But he was not taught seriously and systematically. Moreover, it was not for long.

¹ *The Summing Up.*

² *Ibid.*

For a time Maugham liked the King's school to which he went after the preparatory school. But that was not for long and he persuaded his uncle to let him go to Germany and learn German. After a year or so he returned from Germany and as he was not very keen to be subjected once more to discipline in Cambridge it was decided that he should take up the medical profession. And he entered St. Thomas' Hospital in the autumn of 1892.

Maugham must have inherited his artistic sense from his mother. His grandfather from his father's side was indeed the author of many volumes of law books, but then it is very difficult to find an artistic sense in such dry productions. In the medical school, we see for the first time this seed germinating. He found the first two years of the curriculum very dull and gave his work "no more attention than was necessary to scrape through the examinations."¹ In his spare time, he began to fill his notebooks with "ideas for stories and plays, scraps of dialogue and reflections on what my reading and the various experiences that I was undergoing suggested to me."²

That dull period of the curriculum over, he began to find interest in his work. He had to attend to a number of confinements to get a certificate and for that he had to go into the slums of Lambeth. It was one of the most important periods of his life. "For here I was in contact with..... life in the raw. In those three years I must have witnessed pretty well every emotion of which man is capable. It appealed to my dramatic instinct. It excited the novelist in me. Even now that forty years have passed I can remember certain people so exactly that I could draw a picture of them. Phrases that I heard then still linger on my ears. I saw how men died. I saw how they bore pain. I saw what hope looked like, fear and relief; I saw the dark lines that despair drew

¹ *The Summing Up.*

² *Ibid.*

on a face ; I saw courage and steadfastness. I saw faith shine in the eyes of those who trusted in what I could only think was an illusion and I saw the gallantry that made a man greet the prognosis of death with an ironic joke because he was too proud to let those about him see the terror of his soul.”¹ This experience was the foundation on which he built up his career as a writer, as a painter of life and character.

Liza of Lambeth (1897) was his first novel. He had written two stories and had sent them to Fisher Unwin. After some time Unwin returned them but he asked Maugham whether he had not a novel to publish. This encouraged Maugham and utilising the spare time he had (he still had to work in the Hospital all day), he wrote his first novel. It was entirely based on the incidents that he saw when he was an Obstetric Clerk. The field for that novel was well-prepared. Arthur Morrison with his *Tales of Mean Street* and *A Child of the Jago* had drawn the attention of the public to the slums and Maugham got the full benefit of the new interest created in the subject. The book was a success and the eyes of the intelligentsia were turned to the new star arising. Fisher Unwin pressed him for another bigger novel based on the slums. If Maugham had taken his advice, he would have been regarded as a slum novelist and nothing more. He could not have perhaps risen above the narrow bounds of that. But he was ambitious and sent to his publisher a novel of an entirely different type. It was a novel written in accordance with an advice given by Andrew Lang that a young author without much experience of life should try his hand at historical fiction. *The Making of a Saint* (1898) was set in the Italy of the Renaissance period.

He was gathering experience. And whenever he had opportunity he travelled on the Continent. It was in Italy that he first tried his hand at play-writing. But his first

¹ *The Summing Up.*

full-length play (not considering the curtain-raisers) he wrote when he had already published the two novels mentioned. It was *The Man of Honour* (1898). But no manager accepted it and after a considerable time he rewrote it and sent it to the Stage Society which accepted it.

By now he was qualified as a doctor. But he did not try to establish himself as a medical practitioner as was expected; on the contrary he set himself to making a name as a writer. He wrote a number of plays and novels and short stories, none of which however needs mentioning except *Mrs. Craddock* (1902) which had some success. But it was still a green fruit. He was now seriously trying to become a dramatist. He felt that he had genius in that field; but no manager recognised it before 1907. That year he had his first success as a dramatist and it was a spectacular one. He had then five dramas running in London. They were *A Man of Honour*, *Mrs. Dot*, *Lady Frederick*, *Jack Straw*, and *The Explorer*.

Up to the year 1915 we see him mainly as a dramatist. He thought drama to be his medium of expression; he could write the dialogues well; but he says, "when it came to a page of description I found myself entangled in all sorts of quandaries."¹ That does not mean that he had altogether given up his idea to be a novelist. He wrote a few novels, but they were, we may say, merely by way of experiment. It was not till 1915 that we see his emergence as a novel writer. He wrote *Of Human Bondage*, which is to some extent autobiographical.

The War came and it provided Maugham with fresh experiences. He first joined a unit of ambulance cars and afterwards he was transferred to the Intelligence Department. It was quite an interesting life, though not as thrilling as is represented in detective novels, and it gave him the themes

¹ *The Summing Up*.

for his detective stories which he wrote in the twenties of this century. He was posted in Switzerland. After a year, when his services were no longer required there, he went to America and thence to the South Seas. This journey (which was undertaken apparently for reasons of health but really for the sentimental purpose of seeing the land of which he had dreamt from his boyhood when he read romantic books about the islands) opened a new field before him. He owes to that journey his claim as one of the best English short-story writers.

When he came back he was sent on a mission to Petrograd. He was sent to prevent the Bolsheviks from seizing power. But within three months the Government was overthrown and he returned to England, very ill. At last tuberculosis which had threatened him from his childhood got a hold upon him and he was sent to a sanatorium in the north of Scotland. It was a new experience and he admits that he "learnt a good deal about human nature in that sanatorium" ¹ which otherwise he would never have known.

This period of convalescence was the beginning of one of the most fruitful periods of his life. When engaged in arduous activities as an Intelligence Officer in the War he found that play-writing was a "convenient means of distracting attention from the activities he was engaged in." He wrote *Our Betters*, which was the first of a series of 'comedy of manners.' When he had to spend his time in bed, after he had contracted tuberculosis, he found play-writing "a pleasant way of passing the time." ²

When he recovered from his illness he went to China. This was the last of his long tours. ³ After that he settled down and began to utilise his experiences. He wrote short stories and novels based on the experiences gathered from

¹ *The Summing Up*.

² *Ibid.*

³ He visited India in 1938 but it is not yet known if he has made any use of the experiences gathered from that tour.

the travels. He was now a mature writer and he wrote plays, novels and short stories with equal aptitude. It is no use going into his life any further. A writer usually bases his book mainly on his experiences and we have already dealt in brief with the experiences which he afterwards utilised.

CHAPTER III

INFLUENCES AT WORK

I

Of Masters

Mr. Desmond McCarthy has described Maugham as "the English Maupassant" and of course as a striking label it sounds as good as any other; but like all such compact judgments, this fails to give the proper impression; it is truth but not the whole truth. Maugham himself admits that he was very fond of Maupassant and had finished all his works before he was eighteen. "It is natural enough," he says, "that when at that age I began writing stories myself I should unconsciously have chosen these little masterpieces as a model. I might very well have hit upon a worse."¹ Maupassant in fact served as a ladder; he served as a model to the apprentice; but to label the mature writer Maugham as the English Maupassant is an injustice though a well-meaning one.

The genius of Maupassant lies in his captivating power of story-telling. The stories, say, *Boule de Suif*, *L'Heritage* or *La Parure*, need no power of narration to make them interesting. This merit of Maupassant naturally attracted Maugham and was perhaps a factor in forming his taste for the story interest. For all we know, he might have had an inclination for that irrespective of Maupassant's influence; what Maupassant did, was to strengthen that inclination. Maugham likes to tell a story with a beginning, a middle and an end, just like Maupassant, and that is the only ground in common between the two.

¹ Preface, *Altogether*.

There is another fact that at first seems to point to the influence of Maupassant on Maugham; it is the obvious stress laid on the infidelity of women in Maugham's stories. In Maupassant's time infidelity was a thing of fashion, Maupassant in fact could not conceive a character like Neil Macadam,¹ a pure soul with an instinctive horror of infidelity, without a derisive sneer. In Maugham's case it is different. In books like *Mrs. Craddock*, written at the time when we may suppose that he was steeped in Maupassant, we get chaste or rather constant women. When afterwards he becomes obsessed with that idiosyncrasy, we cannot say that Maupassant had anything to do with it—it grew with the growth of his philosophy of life.²

Maupassant's influence indeed does not go beyond the taste for story interest. But that at first seems so great a factor that we are apt to overlook the other factors which go to build up a story of Maugham. Maupassant takes much less interest in characters than in plots. He does not generally try to analyse characters. He gives a few broad business like touches, just sufficient to be a peg to hang his story on. With Maugham, however, it is an entirely different story. Maugham's method is to conceive a character first—mostly taking a real person as basis³—and then to fit in a plot consistent with the peculiarities of that character; naturally enough his characters are much more deeply sketched than Maupassant's. They are three-dimensional and very convincing whereas Maupassant's characters as characters leave very little impress on the reader's mind; on second thought they are found to be rather unconvincing. Moreover, Maupassant never tries to go beyond what is apparent.

¹ Neil Macadam, *Ah King*.

² *Vide* Chapter VII, Section VII.

³ "I have taken living people and put them into the situations tragic or comic that their characters suggested." (*The Summing Up*.) For details *vide* Chapter IV, Sec. V.

He makes men act but never tries to find out a deeply laid cause of such an action. Maugham tries to find the why and the wherefore. Where he does not impart the sense of the freakishness of fate, he shows some cause of the result in the characters themselves or in the environment. A Philip, to some extent, has to thank, for his miseries, his gentlemanliness and his inner craving for love and affection, a natural trait in an orphan.¹ The cause of the crumbling down of the happy nest built by Doris and Guy lies in the prejudice created in Doris by the environment in which she is brought up.² This is done in every one of Maugham's novels, plays or short stories.

Maupassant falls far short of Maugham in his power of character-sketching. In fact none can teach a writer the method of making a character three-dimensional; that power is instinctive and cannot be taught. For that Maugham is not indebted to anybody. But he is greatly indebted to Maupassant for freeing him from the morbid influence of Chekov to which many of Maugham's contemporaries bowed their heads, and guiding his taste in the direction which suited his genius, namely, the creation of story interest.

When Maugham began to write short stories seriously, he found himself at a disadvantage. Chekov had at that time taken hold of the literary world. To admire him had become a sign of good taste. Writers had begun to imitate him; Chekov showed them that they could do without a plot; what they needed to write a story was only a certain captivating manner of writing; he showed them the way of writing a story by only describing the relations between a few persons. No wonder they fell for him. It was taken to be the most natural thing in the world and those like Maugham who did not imitate Chekov were rather out of favour. It was very likely the taste for well-knit plot which Maupassant

¹ *Of Human Bondage.*

² *Force of Circumstance, Altogether.*

helped to form, that prevented Maugham from imitating Chekov.

Maugham has not transported "Russian melancholy, Russian futility, Russian infirmity of purpose to Surrey or Michigan, Brooklyn or Clapham,"¹ unlike many writers of his day. Some sort of a sense of futility and melancholy, however, we can find in Maugham's writings. Sometimes we find a sense of man fighting with fate; Blanche Stroeve tries vainly to ward off the coming danger which she can instinctively feel²; when Philip gets some peace, Fate throws Mildred on his path to mortify him.³ Harold with the help of his wife Millicent again and again tries to give up the drinking habit but Fate is too strong for him; some incidents occur, some guests turn up and he has to make them merry, or malaria weakens his body and mind and he again resumes his old habit.⁴ There is another Chekovian element in Maugham; it is the indifference and callousness of the people. Everybody is concerned with his own interest. None cares for other people. When Liza lies dying, all the while funny selfish talk is going on. Mrs. Kemp has the consolation that Liza is insured. The thing that pains Mrs. Kemp is not that her daughter is going to die but that such botheration should happen to her.⁵ When Millicent tells the story (being pressed by her parents to tell it) how she came to murder her husband, her father says, "I ought never to have been told, it was most selfish of you"; even a father cannot sympathise with and share the grief of his daughter.⁶ Gallegher's death does not prevent the Christmas Day being celebrated on board the ship; and it was not long before "Mrs. Linsell and the doctor resumed flirtation" which the strange illness of Gallegher

¹ *The Summing Up.*

² *The Moon and Sixpence.*

³ *Of Human Bondage.*

⁴ *Before the Party, Altogether.*

⁵ *Liza of Lambeth.*

⁶ *Before the Party, Altogether.*

had for a time interrupted.¹ The world is like that and Maugham paints it as it is. But there is a great difference between Maugham and Chekov. The latter always creates an atmosphere of futility and callousness; that is the only side of the world he can see. He was "a sick overworked grey-minded man.....For Chekov life is like a game of billiards in which you never pot the red, bring off a losing hazard or make a cannon, and should you by a miraculous chance get a fluke you will almost certainly cut the cloth."² But Maugham's is a healthy mind and he can see the sympathy and joy as well as callousness and suffering. This callousness does not blind his vision; to him callous self-centred people like Mr. Swan³ or Lady Kitty⁴ are mere "cases," they are not the only people in Maugham's world.

It is not quite right to ascribe this sense of futility and callousness to the influence of Chekov. This pessimism has always accompanied a searching intellect. In Chekov this only goes to one extreme. It is most likely that this pessimism in Maugham grew by itself. Even if it is the result of influence from outside, he might have been more beholden to Thomas Hardy than to a Russian whose attitude towards life he does not seem to have always looked upon with favour.

The extent of the influence of Maupassant and Chekov on Maugham is rather uncertain and can be but the subject of speculation. But there are two masters of whose influence on him, small as it is, we can be more certain. They are Ibsen and Oscar Wilde. This influence, however, deserves only a passing mention. It is found only in some of his plays. Ibsen's influence we can see in *The Man of Honour* and nowhere else in an appreciable measure. The influence of Oscar Wilde is of more importance; Maugham's early plays like

¹ *P. & O., Altogether.*

² *Preface, Altogether.*

³ *The Narrow Corner.*

⁴ *The Circle.*

Lady Frederick, *Jack Straw*, etc., bear ample traces of the witty and artificial dialogue which Oscar Wilde brought into vogue. His other dramas too like the *The Circle* show slight traces of the same influence.

It is possible to exaggerate the extent of the masters' influence on Maugham; for, as a matter of fact, Maugham was influenced by the age and his own experiences more than by his masters.

II

Of the Age

A writer generally is a product of his age and Maugham is no exception. He belongs to an age that has been called "an Age of Interrogation"; this age does not take anything at its face value, it tries to go to the root of everything; and Maugham is typical of the twentieth century. He has taken up an attitude of enquiry. We are, however, not concerned here with such a vague influence. We are concerned here with such glaring characteristics as Maugham has in common with the general run of contemporary writers.

One of the most prominent tendencies of the twentieth century writers is to satirise the aristocratic society. In Maugham we do not find this tendency so strong as in, say, Bernard Shaw or Galsworthy. Scattered through his work there are hints of this tendency which becomes prominent in a drama by Maugham called *Our Betters*, where it is noticeable in a very marked degree.

Maugham like his contemporaries is convinced of the rottenness of the aristocratic society. In *Our Betters* he tears away the painted veil which had concealed the ugliness of the real state of that society. Fleming remarks:

There is something in these surroundings that makes me feel terribly uncomfortable. Under the brilliant surface I suspect all kinds of ugly and

shameful secrets that everyone knows and pretends not to. This is a strange house in which the husband is never seen and Arthur Fenwick, a vulgar sensualist, acts as host ; and it's an attractive spectacle, this painted duchess devouring with her eyes a boy young enough to be her son and the conversation—I don't want to seem prude, I dare say people over here talk more freely than the people I've known.¹

Maugham paints a society, where there is no naturalness, no peace, no frankness, no honesty. The words of Pearl to Bessie disclose a horrible state of society :

Elio Glostor, Sadie Twickenham, Naimie Hartlepool.....you don't imagine they're faithful to their husbands. They didn't marry them for that.

This is a touch by which Maugham imparts the sense of universality of that rottenness ; it is not confined to Pearl and the duchess alone but it extends to many others. The first impression the play imparts, is that Maugham is condemning sexual infidelity. But that is not the case. Sexual infidelity does not count very much with Maugham.² Going much deeper he reveals the true state of the present aristocratic society of England. It is money that gives one status in that society. A peer there marries a girl for her dowry and does not care much whether she remains faithful to him or not. He does not ignore a lapse in his wife for the sake of peace and happiness (for the sake of which Maugham advocates tolerance), but ignores it because it is to his interest to tolerate that, his concern being with money. Maugham seeks to expose the inherent rottenness of the society which allows itself to be bought and sold. Pearl sneers at the English and boasts openly :

We have to force ourselves upon them.....The English can never resist getting something for nothing. If a fiddler is in vogue, they'll hear him at my concert.....I've got power, I've got influence. But

¹ *Our Betters.*

² *Vide Chapter VII, Section VII.*

everything I have got—my success, my reputation, notoriety—I've bought it, bought it, bought it.¹

Maugham, however, is not a propagandist but an artist. The condition of the aristocratic society for once provided him with a theme for a drama but he does not like to use it over and over again. In one or two other plays he also makes sly hits at the rotten society but nowhere else does this satirising tendency get the upper hand; it remains subordinate.

An author, specially one who has to depend upon the public for his livelihood, has to respect the conventions of society in which he lives. Before the war open discussion about matters concerning sex was taboo.² Maugham says in *Mrs. Craddock* (1902), "It is terrible to be desirous of saying all sorts of passionate things, while convention prevents you from speaking anything but the most commonplace." The result is that all through the book we see Maugham indulge in sentimentality which comes out of the suppressed sexual atmosphere. In that book there are purple patches which we do not get in the books written after the War. We get there phrases like 'beautiful youth,' 'a virgin heart,' etc.: Bertha Craddock asserts that she "is suffering so much that she could kill herself." In *The Hero* James says to Mrs. Clibborn, "What can you do to ease the bitter aching of my heart?" This kind of sentimentality and melodramatic utterances at once point to an undercurrent of physical passion and suppressed feeling which could not be frankly expressed in pre-War days. An embrace then had to stand for both embrace and something more and an author naturally took much pains to describe an embrace. The change in public mentality effected a subtle change in the writings of Maugham; in *Cakes and Ale*, *The Narrow Corner*, *The Painted Veil* or *Theatre*, we never get such sentimental purple patches. The

¹ *Our Betters*.

² Even such an innocent book as *Mrs. Craddock* was published by Heinemann with omissions.

description has become straightforward and matter-of-fact. Now he can call a spade a spade with impunity.

There is one other matter in which a change in public taste has brought about a great change in the art of an author. In the last decade of the nineteenth century Oscar Wilde created a vogue for artificial sparkling dialogues and the public taste did not change till after the War. Gradually the vogue of colloquialism in drama came into existence as a result of a demand for naturalism on the stage. As a result the dramatists had to give up the mode of Oscar Wilde and make their dialogues colloquial. Maugham is one of the dramatists who had to adapt himself to this change in public taste. In earlier dramas like *Lady Frederick* we get ample proof of the influence of the school of Oscar Wilde, but in recent dramas like, say, *The Circle*, though there is a considerable amount of witty dialogue, they are all in colloquial and simple language. The actors now have become so used to colloquialism that they become helpless if the language be otherwise. Maugham tells us of a sad experience of his.¹ In *Sacred Flame* he tried to make his characters speak not in the words they would have actually spoken, but in a more formal manner "using phrases they would have used if they had been able to prepare them beforehand and had they known how to put what they wanted to say in exact and well-chosen language." But the actors were unable to deliver that naturally and Maugham had to make slight alterations to suit them. This fact is not as insignificant as it may seem to a layman; it has changed the whole character of the dialogue which is an essential factor in a play.

The influence of science on Maugham needs a passing mention here. The inexorable laws of Physics, *i.e.*, the laws of Nature, exact a reverence and awe from many modern English writers which Fate did from the ancient Greek Tragedians. We may say that the laws of Nature have taken the

¹ *The Summing Up*.

place of the Greek Fate. We shall discuss in detail the effect of this influence on Somerset Maugham later in Chapter VII ("In Quest of Peace," Section 1).

The greatest influence on the writers of to-day is perhaps that of Freud and his school of Psycho-analysis. The vogue of psycho-analysis is now so widespread that it has become a characteristic of the twentieth century, just like its other characteristic, social criticism. It has ceased to be the influence of a single scientist. It is now one of the influences of the age. Psycho-analysis existed before Freud, but here what is particularly meant by the term is that portion of psycho-analysis which never existed before, the search into the subconscious and the unconscious.

Except in one place¹ Maugham has never mentioned Freud; still it would seem that he has been using the researches of the Freudian school in his novels from the very first. And this is only to be expected, for Maugham is a doctor. Of course, the influence of psycho-analysis has not entered into Maugham's work so organically as it has for instance into that of Joyce. Still there are certain things in his novels which bear strong marks of a Freudian parentage.

One of his debts to Freud is dream symbolism² (for Freud is, without a doubt, the greatest psycho-analyst of our time to have analysed dreams). In *Rain* this is used with a very striking effect. Davidson, the missionary, dreams a strange dream.

"This morning he told me that he'd been dreaming about the mountains of Nebraska," Mrs. Davidson says to Dr. Macphail.

"That's curious," said Dr. Macphail.

It is curious indeed; Dr. Macphail remembers to have seen them through the windows of the train when he crossed America. "They were like huge mole hills, rounded and

¹ In *Theatre*.

² Vide Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, Chapter V; also, Dr. William Stekel, *The Meaning of Dream Symbolism*,

smooth, and they rose from the plain abruptly." It strikes Dr. Macphail that they are like a woman's breasts. The meaning of this dream becomes very clear when Davidson commits suicide after having succumbed to the charms of Sadie Thompson, the "Scarlet Woman." This dream shows which way the wind is blowing. The subconscious mind is gradually getting the upper hand. As long as Davidson had full control over his body he had escaped. But when he is considerably weakened physically owing to irregular dieting and even fasting, he gradually loses control over his body, and his subconscious thought first shows its growing strength through that dream. Subconsciously Davidson, perhaps, was always inclined to sinning, and his militant hatred of the sinners, Sadie Thompson, and the natives unused to the restrictions of civilization, is only the outward expression of the inward struggle between the conscious piety and "the subconscious." It has been asserted by the Psycho-analytic school of Freud¹ that a hidden inclination for one thing often produces a violent hatred on the surface against it. St. Paul's joy in persecuting the Christians in his early life has been said to be the result of the reaction of the conscious against an inner inclination towards them. It was the same with Davidson. Blanche Stroeve's violent hatred for Strickland is only the reaction of the conscious mind against the physical attraction she feels for Strickland and to which she at last succumbs.²

The dream is a favourite instrument with Maugham to reveal the workings of the human mind. Generally of course he does not take the help of symbolism—it would have gone over the heads of most of his readers if he had, except such simple symbols as used in *Rain*. Neil Macadam, when sick and weak in body, dreams of Darya in his arms; he knows that "One can't help one's dreams, but they are an indication

¹ By the school of Psycho-analysis I have always meant the school of Freud and not of Jung or Adler.

² *The Moon and Sixpence*.

of what is going on in the subconscious.”¹ He struggles against that attempt of the subconscious getting the upper hand and, unlike Davidson, succeeds. Kitty’s hope that Townsend really loves her, is revealed in a dream in which she dreams of Charlie Townsend embracing her and saying that it was all a mistake.² The Russian journalist’s wife dreams that her husband is trying to kill her by throwing her over the balusters. The journalist commenting on that says to the narrator :

She thought I hated her, she thought I would gladly be rid of her ; she knew of course she was insufferable, and at some time or other the idea had evidently occurred to her that I was capable of murdering her. The thoughts of men are incalculable and ideas enter our minds that we should be ashamed to confess.³

It is a clear analysis. Dreams have been used before Freud drew our attention to their importance ; but it is undoubtedly due to the influence of Freud that they have been given so much prominence in this century.

Maugham has also taken from the psycho-analysts the theory of sublimation. Talking about the cause of Julia’s success Michael remarks :

All those instincts went into her acting. Sublimation. That’s it. I often think that’s what’s made her such a great actress.⁴

The psycho-analysts have taught Maugham that the same force incites the creative activities of the body as well as those of art. When the body is starved the creative impulse produces artistic inspiration. In Maugham there is no instance where an artist is at the same time a passionate lover. The creative force, when denied one outlet, takes another. Charles Strickland is able to put all his energies into painting when he is

¹ *Neil Macadam, Ah king.*

² *The Painted Veil.*

³ *The Dream, Cosmopolitans.*

⁴ *Theatre.*

thoroughly disgusted with sexual life.¹ Edward Driffeld's passion for Rosie exhausted, he is able to write his masterpiece.² Mrs. Albert Forrester writes her masterpiece "The Achilles Statue" when her husband leaves her.³ The theory of sublimation⁴ does not apply only in the cases where the sexual energy has been diverted to the channel of creative art. It also applies in the case of Walter, whose passion for Kitty being obstructed finds expression in his sacrifice for suffering humanity, or in the case of Kitty who takes to nursing babies and other humanitarian works.⁵ It may even be applied in the case of Michael who concentrates all his energies in organising his theatre when Julia, his wife, gives up indulging in "in all such nonsense."⁶

There are a few cases of sexual aberration in Maugham's works. Here also one may trace the influence of the psychoanalysts. After the War such aberrations have become a very common thing and the talk of the day. In Maugham's earlier works we cannot expect to find any use of that. In *Theatre* (1937), he makes a dramatic use of it. Dolly de Vries has a passion for Julia. Julia points that out to Michael. "What a filthy mind you 've got, Julia!" he exclaims. But that does not prevent Michael from making use of Dolly's homosexual tendency. Together they manage to get Dolly to finance their scheme of opening a theatre; Julia good-humouredly points out to Michael that he is acting like Claudio in *Measure for Measure* when he presses her to get round Dolly.⁷ Maugham does not make use of such aberrations frequently as many of his contemporaries are doing. He never uses anything which does not help the progress of the

¹ *The Moon and Sixpence.*

² *Cakes and Ale.*

³ *The Creative Impulse, First Person Singular.*

⁴ Vide Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex* (in one volume), Chapter VIII.

⁵ *The Painted Veil.*

⁶ *Theatre.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

story. It would have been against his nature if he had used sexual perversity for its own sake.

There is another matter for which Maugham may be suspected of being directly indebted to the scientific school of psychology, though it has been used by writers of antiquity. It is the theory of Sadism and Masochism. It has been found that there are some persons who like being tortured and love the tormentors better for the pain that they inflict on them. In men this peculiar fact (masochism) is an aberration but in women it is to some extent natural. Sadism is quite the opposite.¹ Maugham used this even in his first novel, *Liza of Lambeth*. Liza succumbs to Jim when he gives her "a violent swinging blow on the stomach." After that he commands, "Come on" and Liza loses all power of resistance. Jim's brute force makes her love him and hate Tom who is gentle and tender. Bertha Craddock remarks, "It is a commonplace that some wives will stand anything from their husbands; it seems they love them all the more because they are brutal. I think I'm like that."² When Lawson whips his wife Ethel she feels a strange exultation. "What he had done did not outrage her when she looked at herself in the glass and arranged her hair, her eyes were shining. There was a strange look in them. Perhaps then she was nearer loving him than she had ever been before."³ Lawson's addiction to wife-beating may be taken as an example of sadism as also the brutality of Jim⁴; but Maugham does not make use of this as much as he makes use of masochism.⁵

In the cases that we have looked into Maugham has not used the ordinary psychology of individuals, as the writers

¹ Vide Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex* (in one volume), Chapter V.

² *Mrs. Craddock*.

³ *The Pool, The Trembling of a Leaf*.

⁴ *Liza of Lambeth*.

⁵ Vide Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex* (in one volume), Chapter IV. In his latest novel, *Christmas Holiday*, Maugham paints another extremely masochistic woman in Lydia. In the same book (p. 284) he has slightly touched upon what is known as 'Œdipus Complex.'

of old have always done ; like many of his contemporaries he has also drawn upon the fund of knowledge that Freud and others have provided his generation with.

III

Of Life and Career

" I have had a varied, and often an interesting life, but not an adventurous one," Maugham remarks in his autobiography ; one cannot but be amused by the comment made on this statement by Mr. R. H. Ward. He informs us :

It is unnecessary for an artist to have an ' interesting ' or an ' eventful ' life, for all life, however dull and ordinary it may appear, is interesting and eventful : it is human life, and that is enough. Remarkably little ' happened ' to Jane Austen, but she did not lack material for her novels. More happens in the mind than in material circumstances, and a man who has lived always in a country village, a woman who has spent her time in cooking and cleaning have as much to write about, as others whose lives have been full of outward and visible happenings.¹

Quite true ; but a cook or a maid servant can only write within her narrow limits of vision ; no lively imagination can help her picture the household of a duke or the life in China or Tahiti. A Jane Austen cannot write the novels of Stevenson, Conrad or Maugham. The nature of an author's writings depends considerably on his experiences.

About his travels Maugham says, " I have gone into the world because I thought it was necessary in order to get the experience without which I could not write." ² His experiences as a medical student provided him with materials for *Liza of Lambeth* ; his experiences in life at Whitsable, at Paris and Heidelberg and London were utilized in *Of Human Bondage* and enabled him to write *Mrs. Craddock*.

¹ R. H. Ward, *W. Somerset Maugham*.

² *The Summing Up*.

But soon he found that he had exhausted his store ; he could not produce anything new ; it would only be in some way or other repetitions of what he had already produced ; it would be tedious. The War provided him with materials which he utilised afterwards when writing the delightful detective stories,¹ but it was a small fund. The thing that made a complete change in his writings was his journey to the South Seas. It opened up a new vista. Maugham himself has given a clear idea of the strength of the new experience :

I found a new self. Ever since I left St. Thomas Hospital I had lived with people who attached value to culture. I had come to think there was nothing in the world more important than art. I looked for a meaning in the universe and the only meaning I could find was the beauty that men here and there produced. On the surface my life was varied and exciting ; but beneath it was narrow. Now I entered a new world and the instinct in me of a novelist went out to absorb the novelty..... What excited me was to meet one person after another who was new to me. I was like a naturalist who comes into a country where the fauna are of unimaginable variety. ²

It provided him not only with a vast canvas but with the figures to put on it ; it not only provided him with a background of unimaginable beauty, it also provided an opportunity of seeing the drama of life played against it. Maugham had too good an observant eye to miss anything. They all came back to him when he was writing in spite of his bad memory which he laments in his autobiography. The journey to the South Seas was not his last long journey. After his recovery from tuberculosis he travelled to China and *The Painted Veil* is the product of his experience gathered there ; he found there the original of at least Mother Superior, if not of the other characters ; perhaps it was here that he found the original of the delightful Dr. Saunders, ³ the first sketch of whom we find in *On a China Screen*.

¹ *Ashenden*.

² *The Summing Up*.

³ *The Narrow Corner*.

Very few have drawn from their own lives so much material as Somerset Maugham. He has imagination enough but his foot is so firmly planted on earth that his imagination cannot soar, it can only give colour to materials which Maugham has gathered from real life. He may be said to be a realist. He not only puts down his experiences on paper with some modifications but puts in much of himself, his own doubts and misgivings, beliefs and disbeliefs and opinions (which, by the way, is only a product of his experience) into his writings. Of his plays he remarks, "Even in my lightest pieces I had put in so much of myself that I was embarrassed to hear it disclosed to a crowd of people."¹ And what he says of his plays is more true of his novels and short stories—*Of Human Bondage*, *The Fall of Edward Barnard*, *The Narrow Corner*, etc., are records of his mind.

His travels and experiences not only gave him the knowledge of men, they also taught him tolerance. After many journeys he came to the conclusion that "the heart of men is in the right place, but their head is a thoroughly inefficient organ."² They only deserve sympathy and tolerance. The journeys have made him conclude, unlike Chekov, that the human race is not by nature cruel and callous.

¹ *The Summing Up*.

² *Ibid*.

CHAPTER IV

A NOTE ON TECHNIQUE

I

Mechanical Devices

Mechanical devices are essential to a novelist to unfold his story and the difference between a good and a bad artist lies to a great extent in the art of concealing the obviousness of these devices from the reader, --in the power of distracting the reader's attention from this mechanical side of the structure with its rough angularities. One of such devices is the time-shift of which Maugham has become a master. It is a device by which the author goes backwards or forwards and thus makes his story complete. This practice is common to writers, who relate the story from an omniscient point of view as distinguished from the method followed by authors who leave the story to be told by each character. Most of the modern writers, however, do not follow the old method of writing from an omniscient point of view but take some pains to make that time-shift natural; for example, they pursue the thoughts of a character in the story and go back to the antecedents. It is interesting to note how Maugham has used and developed this instrument.

In his first novels we do not get the use of this device in a marked degree. In *Explorer* we find the first trace of this device.¹ But compared with his recent novels it is nothing. In *Of Human Bondage* we find again the straightforward narrative. It is in *The Moon and Sixpence* that we first get this device fairly developed.

¹ When Alec tells Lucy the story of his life.

In *The Moon and Sixpence* we find these mechanical devices becoming progressively faultless. He has used the first person singular, which, as we shall see later, suits him ; and he has tried the device of time-shift. The narrator begins by speaking of Strickland's fame after his death and then goes back naturally to the early days of his acquaintance with him. He then proceeds with the story until their final parting in Paris. Then there is another shift and we come to a period, many years after that parting, nearly to the period when the story begins. The narrator tells of his visit to Tahiti, the direct result of which is the book. At Tahiti he became acquainted with the details of Strickland's life. The time is shifted back to the period when Strickland landed there and the story is carried forward until his death. The last time-shift brings us almost to the present ; it tells us of the narrator's return from Tahiti and his meeting with Strickland's family.

We find these shifts of time no doubt but they are hardly noteworthy. If the first chapter be not taken into consideration we may fail to find out any time-shift at all. And in the first chapter there is very little ingenuity and mastery shown in using the time-shift. In *The Painted Veil*, however, we find that he has mastered this device. The story begins dramatically at a period when Kitty has already been seduced by Townsend. The time is shifted with the thoughts in Kitty's mind to the days when she was not married to Walter. We are told of Kitty's family and how she came to marry Walter. Then we are told of their first days in Tehing-Yen and how she came to know Townsend. Thus gradually we come to the time when the story began and the story then moves on without any more time-shift.

In *Theatre* we find the highest perfection of this device. The story opens with the introduction of Tom into Julia's life. Very naturally she presents him with a photograph of hers. When he is gone, she looks at the

photographs methodically arranged and the memories of the dead past come to her quite naturally and we come to know of her early life on the stage ; we are introduced to Jimmie Langton ; we are told how she is married to Michael and of their gradual rise in the theatrical world. We are posted up-to-date in this way and we are now prepared to move on with the real story, Julia's fascination for Tom and her emancipation from that.

Maugham's use of the first person singular is nothing but a device which suits his temperament. In *The Moon and Sixpence* he tries this device first and between this novel and *Cakes and Ale* where he last uses it, he has written a number of short stories in first person singular. There are obvious advantages of this device. The ordinary method used in writing a novel had been that of the omniscient author revealing facts which sometimes strikes the reader as impossible to have been known by the author ; it tends to destroy the illusion of the story, if the writer does not possess a fascinating personality which can be felt by the reader, or, in other words, the reader feels the intrusion of the writer and sometimes resents it. In writing in the first person singular, Maugham has this advantage that the reader never feels the irritation which the omniscience of the author sometimes arouses. This makes the reader feel very intimate with the narrator ; he is quite at home with the workings of the narrator's mind, the feelings and sentiments that flit in and out. The reader understands the point of view of Ashenden in *Cakes and Ale* ; it never hurts his sense of logic when Ashenden gives his estimates of others' characters or when he is told something which he could not know otherwise. It has its disadvantages also ; it binds the hands of the author and he cannot take any liberty when informing his reader of an important development and sometimes (as we shall see when we are dealing with his short stories) he has to slip into the role of the omniscient author to do that.

This difficulty is considerably lessened when the author uses a variation of this first person singular, namely, writing from the angle of vision of a character in the story. The difference of this method with the other one just mentioned is that in this method the narrator is the author who presents the angle of vision of one character in the story ; in the other method the narrator is a character in the story. In his first three or four novels Maugham is the omniscient author ; in *Mrs. Craddock* however we find him trying to adopt this method. But the angle of vision there does not remain constant ; it shifts from Bertha Craddock to Mrs. Ley and back, sometimes to the other characters too. This shifting of the angle of vision no doubt enriches the novel and helps the novelist in producing a sense of variety and in depicting fully rounded characters. Whether Maugham's adoption of the method of using one angle of vision indicates that he thinks it the better method of the two is merely a matter of conjecture. We can only note that as he grows mature he gives up this method of shifting his angle of vision ; perhaps the singleness of the angle of vision is suitable to him because it is easier for him to identify himself consistently with one character. Anyhow, in *The Explorer* he still shifts his angle of vision and it is the same with other novels written before *Of Human Bondage*. In *Of Human Bondage* we find this art finally developed. We are made to see everything through the eyes of Philip Carey. This is perhaps the best method possible (at least as far as such themes as are dealt with in *Of Human Bondage* are concerned) ; it prevents the reader from questioning the illusion of authenticity which is the measure of a great novel. The value of this method can be judged very clearly from Conrad's *Almayer's Folly*, as Ames has pointed out. The reader gets a consistent impression as long as the story is told from the angle of Almayer ; it seems quite possible to the reader that Conrad must have somehow got the story out of Almayer ; but when the angle is unnecessarily shifted to

Almayer's Malaya wife and other characters the impression of continuity is broken; the illusion of reality is impaired. "The reader begins to wonder if all these people had told Conrad their secrets. That being improbable, he must have made up the whole thing and its authenticity is lost."¹ The reader does not become thoroughly disgusted only because of the story interest.

After Maugham had perfected this method in *Of Human Bondage* he has used it always, except where he has used the first person singular itself. In *The Painted Veil*, the angle of vision is that of Kitty, in *The Narrow Corner* that of Dr. Saunders, in *Theatre* that of Julia. In *The Moon and Sixpence* or *Cakes and Ale* too we get one particular angle of vision, only that happens to be that of the narrator himself, the extreme case of such particularised angle of vision.

In this method the author gets all the advantages of using the first person singular getting rid of its disadvantages. When in *The Narrow Corner* we are told of the happening in the garden (the courting of Louise by Fred Blake), or when we are told of the doings of Erik Christessen after he found out Louise compromised with Fred Blake (which could not have been known by Dr. Saunders, whose angle of vision is being presented to us), this fault of the author does not seem to us as grievous as it would have been if it was written in the first person singular; these faults are covered up by the charm of the narrative.

These are the devices on which Maugham's novels stand; but these are so concealed, so fitted in with the plot, that they never strike the reader as only technical devices; they never give the impression of being mechanical. This is undoubtedly a sign of the writer's genius. "The technical devices," Maugham remarks at one place, "that an author uses to capture your interest are his own affair. Such a one as the 'stream of thought' is an amusing trick, but it is of

¹ Ames, *Aesthetic of the Novel*.

no more real importance than the epistolary style which was in vogue during the eighteenth century.”¹ Those tricks are the author’s “own affair” no doubt but there is one connection which they have with the reader, it is that they must never be taken as obvious tricks by a reader. Maugham’s mastery lies in his success in concealing the tricks.

II

The Hand of the Dramatist

How to begin a story has always been a serious problem with novelists. The English novelists of older times generally began from the beginning and plodded on to the end; this even the modern novelists do sometimes but with a difference—they try to make the beginning dramatic. The essential factor in a novel is its story interest; the character-sketching reveals the genius of the novelist no doubt—a novel without good sketches is a bad novel,—but (despite contemporary novelists like Virginia Woolf) a novel without a story interest, though a novelty, is no novel at all. A good novel must be able to get a firm hold on the reader to demand all his attention from the start to the finish and the beginning is a factor in creating this interest in the reader. The reader must be made at once interested in the story; in this busy world a dull beginning will not do. It is very difficult to find the reader who will read through a dozen pages of dry descriptions, of place, of characters and of time, to come to the real story interest. What is needed is a dramatic opening like that of, say, the *Pit and the Pendulum* of Edgar Allan Poe :

I was sick—sick unto death with that long agony and when they at last unbound me, and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were

¹ Preface, *Cosmopolitans*.

leaving me. The sentence—the dread sentence of death—was the last distinct accentuation that reached my ears.

It makes the reader sit up and take notice ; he plunges into the story at once. Maugham knows this art. The sense of drama is like a sixth sense in him and the profession of a dramatist has developed it fully.

Here is a typical beginning :

She gave a startled cry.

“ What’s the matter ?” he asked.

Notwithstanding the darkness of the shuttered room he saw her face on a sudden distraught with terror. ¹

We do not however get such dramatic beginnings in the first two or three of his novels. His first novel begins with the description of Vere Street, Lambeth, on the first Saturday afternoon in August. It is a straightforward description of the old type. But it did not take him long to develop the art of dramatic beginning—he has cultivated it almost religiously. He does not of course always begin as dramatically as in *The Painted Veil*, yet he begins always from a dramatic moment from which the story goes on effortlessly.

There cannot be any doubt that this art is to a great extent an effect of his training as a dramatist. The profession of a dramatist has had another influence on his novels and it is of far greater importance than the art of dramatic beginning. The profession of a dramatist has taught him law and order. “ My prepossessions in art,” he says, “ are on the side of law and order. I like a story that fits. I did not take to writing stories seriously till I had had much experience as a dramatist and this experience taught me to leave out everything that did not serve the dramatic value of my story. It taught me to make incident follow incident in such a manner

¹ *The Painted Veil*.

as to lead up to the climax I had in mind.”¹ An examination of *Liza of Lambeth*, which was written before he had tried his hand at drama, gives a clear idea as to how much his training as a dramatist has done.

At the time of writing his first novel Maugham's assets were his keen power of observation and a natural aptitude for writing dialogues, and in that novel we find ample proof of these powers. Whenever he finds an opportunity he uses them and he uses them without discrimination, without restraint. He does not yet know the value of condensation; he cannot yet select. He uses descriptions which have little to do with the main trend of the story. The opening picture, we admit, is required, for without creating the atmosphere of frolic and mirth he could not create the condition in which Liza meets Jim; it creates an opportunity for Jim to show his effrontery in kissing Liza, and that boldness attracts Liza, and the story moves on. But this cannot be said of the feasting scenes. No doubt the scene is not altogether useless; it shows how Liza is getting fascinated by Jim and repulsed by Tom's address. But Maugham rambles too much; he cannot restrain himself from showing his power of observation and mastery of dialogue, to show which he takes too much space. It would not have been like this if it had been one of his matured novels.

This prolixity disappears as a result of his experience as a dramatist. A dramatist has no time to ramble, he has got to pick up the essentials and fit them together to get an even flow to the end. In writing a novel Maugham was not bound by any such compulsory restriction; but once used to such restriction in writing his plays he does not give it up, and this habit, we must say, has done him much good as a novelist. Such well-knit stories may not resemble life in which stories straggle but nevertheless they are good stories.

¹ Preface, *Altogether*.

"The story-teller arranges life to suit his purposes. He follows a design in mind, leaving out this and changing that; he distorts facts to his advantage, according to his plan; and when he attains his object produces a work of art."¹

The novels written after he had become an experienced dramatist show an immense improvement in his art compared with his first few novels. The novels² written in the first decade of this century show many immaturities but they also show that Maugham has already learnt the art of selection. He has learnt restraint; he does not put in unnecessary episodes.

This frugality becomes so ingrained in him that even in *Of Human Bondage*, where it is quite expected that he would ramble when dealing with the life of Philip, he manages to produce a well-knit work of art; if he had rambled it would have been quite in accordance with the English tradition. In similar books, say, Thackeray's *Newcomes*, we find this rambling; in attempting to give a picture of society Thackeray has given us episodes which do not, in any way, help to mould the character of the hero or to develop the plot. Speaking about this characteristic of English novels Maugham remarks:

Our great novels are shapeless and unwieldy.³ It has pleased the English to like this laxity of construction, this haphazard conduct of a rambling story, this wandering in and out of curious characters who have nothing much to do with the theme. . . . The sermons that Henry James breathe to the English on form in the novel aroused their interest but little affected their practice.⁴

¹ Preface, *Altogether*.

² Even in *Mrs. Craddock* (1902) there are some scenes which should have been left out, as the constantly repeated scenes where Bertha scolds her husband for coldness. These scenes are so similar that they cannot but bore the reader. In *Theatre* where there is a set of similar circumstances, Maugham takes care to avoid such repetitions. But it must be noted that these repetitions in *Mrs. Craddock* are not exactly irrelevancies; they show how Bertha is becoming a shrew; they become tedious because Maugham cannot conceal their similarities.

³ "H. G. Wells declared in a lecture once that the novel was a kind of lucky bag in which anything and everything was to be found." (Walpole, *English Novel*.)

⁴ *The Summing Up*.

Maugham's great novel *Of Human Bondage* is anything but "shapeless and unwieldy". Maugham gives us a hint about the central theme of the novel in the book itself :

Philip was occupied with the forming of a pattern out of the manifold chaos of life.

And every incident related goes to make up that pattern. We are given only a selection of the experiences which have gone to mould Philip, which have helped to develop his character ; we have only been given the " pattern " of his life, we need not know " the manifold chaos " of it.

We are told of Philip's early childhood, of his romantic imagination, and the gradual disillusionment which comes as a result of his increasing contact with the realities of life ; we are told how his faith in a benevolent and omnipotent God is shaken ; for some time Perkins, the headmaster, comes between Philip and his tendency of becoming an atheist. The episodes of his school life, mostly cruel, help to mould his character ; he becomes more and more shy, reserved and bitter. His life in Paris, Heidelberg and London makes him completely disillusioned about life. There is a panoramic procession of characters like Hayward, Miss Wilkinson, Week, Cacilie, Mildred and many others who come into Philip's life and pass away, but they all leave him maturer, they all leave their mark on him ; it is not a case of " wandering in and out of curious characters who have nothing much to do with the theme. "

The same can be said of the novels that follow *Of Human Bondage*. The incidents in *The Painted Veil* help to build up Kitty's character, its first stage and the transformation. In the *Cakes and Ale* the incidents do not help to mould any character but they reveal Rosie Driffield and others from all sides ; there is almost no incident which does not throw a new light on one side or the other of the characters. In *The Narrow Corner* incidents lead to incidents producing the

final catastrophe. The *Theatre* is made up of incidents leading to and showing Julia's fascination for Tom and incidents leading to her disillusionment. The preliminary chapters dealing with Julia's early life are not in the least irrelevant to the main plot. We are told in those chapters how Julia's character was moulded, how she fell in love with Michael and how she got over it. Without the help of these chapters it would not have been possible to know the state of mind she was in. She had been out of love for a long time and that explains why she is so eager to fall in love with Tom.

"Everything that has no relation to the story must be ruthlessly thrown away," Chekov says in his advice to Schoukin. "If in the first chapter you say that a gun hung on the wall, in the second or third chapter it must without fail be discharged."¹ We shall see later that Chekov himself does not follow this advice sometimes; but Maugham, after he attained maturity, has seldom deviated from this principle laid down so clearly by Chekov. Even the dyspepsia of Captain Nichols in *The Narrow Corner* has a cause for its existence; without its existence Dr. Saunders cannot get a passage on board the ship, and if Dr. Saunders be not on board, the ship need not go to Kanda-Meira to drop Dr. Saunders there, and naturally in that case the tragedy cannot happen; Captain Nichols's dyspepsia therefore is an essential factor. It is not there to raise a laugh as Mrs. Kemp's rheumatism in *Liza of Lambeth* does.

But as Maugham has pointed out, even Chekov did not always follow his own dictum. In *The Bishop*, "the Bishop eats some tainted fish and a few days later dies of typhoid; we may suppose that it was the tainted fish that killed him. If that is so he did not die of typhoid, but of Ptomaine poisoning, and the symptoms were not as described."² In fact Chekov has no necessity of making the Bishop eat the

¹ Quoted in the Preface to *Altogether*.

² Preface, *Altogether*.

tainted fish. In Maugham's case too, there are one or two such slips. One of them occurs in *Cakes and Ale*. Maugham goes on there to describe how the career of Jasper Gibbon was made by Mrs. Burton; it takes him four or five pages to do that and the only point in doing that is to illustrate Mrs. Barton's power of 'making' careers. In fact he so abandons himself to his free and homely style that he forgets his habitual restraint. Still there is some excuse for it, though it is rather a flimsy one, and what is more creditable to Maugham, this sort of rambling is a very rare thing for him.

In two ways therefore we find Maugham's profession of a dramatist has influenced his novels. It has taught him how and when to begin a story. It has decided the form of his novels, ranging him by the side of Chekov, Henry James, Maupassant, Stephan Zweig and others who advocate plots without digressions.

III

The Best Form

In his characteristically high-handed manner Mr. R. H. Ward tells us that "a work of art should, as it were, return in the end to the place where it began, and should be balanced not only in the aspects of its timing, but in all its aspects, as a circle is balanced"¹; and judging according to this dictum he thinks that this is the reason that makes Huxley's novel, *Eyeless in Gaza*, "so satisfying a novel." There cannot be a shallower judgment. "There is not a critic alive now," says Virginia Woolf, in an article in *Nation*, "who will say that a novel is a work of art and that as such he will judge it"; apparently she had no opportunity of taking Mr. R. H. Ward into consideration.

¹ R. H. Ward, *W. Somerset Maugham*.

Maugham has not produced any novel which can satisfy Mr. Ward's craving for "the symbol for a circle"; "he fails to make a pattern, in his timing as in his construction," Mr. Ward points out.¹ Apparently Mr. Ward has forgotten for the moment that the essential factor in a novel is not its mechanical form, it is the sense of life that it imparts that makes the value of a novel. "We know of novels," Lubbock points out, "which everybody admits to be badly constructed, but which is so full of life that it does not seem to matter. May we not conclude that form, design, composition, have a rather different bearing upon the art of fiction than any they may have elsewhere?"² Lubbock has come to the conclusion that "the best form is that which makes the most of the subject—there is no other definition of the meaning of form." This is an astute judgment. It gives stress to the fact that in fiction form follows matter; there is one form that suits one kind of subject, there is another to suit a different one. The greatest thing is to sustain the interest and to do that a harmony between form and matter is necessary.

Maugham's novels may not satisfy Mr. Ward's craving for form, but they satisfy the readers. They seldom have fluctuating story interest; Maugham has the power, as all the great writers of fiction have to take the reader with him. This he can do because he chooses a form "which makes the most of the subject." We are of course leaving out the immature novels for obvious reasons. His mature novels, *Of Human Bondage*, *The Painted Veil*, *Cakes and Ale*, *The Narrow Corner*, *Theatre*, show varying forms adopted to do proper justice to the matter.

Of Human Bondage is a novel in which the author has not used the device of time-shift; it is a straightforward narrative which makes Mr. Ward take it for an "uninspired"

¹ R. H. Ward, *W. Somerset Maugham*.

² *The Craft of Fiction*.

novel. It begins from the childhood of Philip Carey, moves on with Philip growing into manhood and ends with his marriage with Sally. In spite of its being "uninspired" it is the most moving of Maugham's novels. The reason is not far to seek; it is the fact that for a subject of this type a straightforward narrative is most appealing. The author tells us about the growth and development of Philip's mind, how the incidents of his life gradually moulds him. If he had used time-shift, supposing he was master of it, then, he would have had to make Philip remember his early life, sitting comfortably in a room neatly arranged by his industrious wife, Sally. He could not have used the ever-changing time-shifts which Huxley has used in *Eyeless in Gaza*; it would have broken the continuity and marred the interest; it could not have given the impression of Philip gradually growing up under the hard buffets of life. If he had used ever-changing time-shifts, it would have been something like the method used in the first portion of *Theatre* where we are informed of Julia's early life. It would have been an absolutely unnecessary artifice and the obviousness of the artifice would have been its greatest defect. In *The Painted Veil* Maugham's main theme is the transformation of Kitty's soul. Naturally it was unnecessary to begin from the beginning; he begins at a time when Kitty has already been seduced, when she has come to the lowest rung of her frivolous, unthinking and selfish self. But we must know her early life which would explain the events that have occurred, which would explain the nature that has been formed in her in an unthinking and shallow society. For that the time-shift has been very effective; we do not lose sight of the main theme, and at the same time we know of the necessary past. A plain narrative has a charm which the complicated, ingenious pattern of time-shift of, say, Mr. Ford Madox-Ford, fails to produce. The straightforward narrative portion of *The Painted Veil* makes us feel with the characters, just as in the case of *Of Human*

Bondage ; the time-shift is a device that helps effectively to tell us of those portions which do not fall in the period that is included in the main theme.

Cakes and Ale comes nearest to Mr. Ward's idea of " the symbol of a circle ". It begins at a time when Edward Driffield, the novelist, is already dead and Alroy Kear has taken up the task of writing his biography. He delicately approaches the narrator, asking him to supply materials for writing Edward Driffield's early life. The first talk with Kear about Driffield's early life, when the narrator is not directly asked to supply materials, makes him ruminate over the time when he had first heard of Edward's name at his uncle's table ; it was not then a name much honoured there. Then the time is shifted to the ' present ' and we are told how the narrator is invited by Mrs. Driffield to stay with her for a few days. His mind flies back to the lunch he had with her when Edward was alive. Edward told the company that he had taught narrator to bicycle. The time is then naturally shifted forty years back when he learned to bicycle. We then know of Edward's life at Blackstable, up to the time of his hurried exit from that place. There is another time-shift and we are told of the conversation of the narrator with Alroy Kear when he is made to promise to help him in writing Edward's biography. The next time-shift takes us back to the narrator's first years in London where he met the Driffields for the first time after their departure from Blackstable. We are told of Rosie's sweetness and unfaithfulness to her husband ; we are told how Driffield's career was ' made ' by Mrs. Barton ; we come to know how Rosie eloped with George Kemp. After that the narrator gradually had lost touch with him. We are then led to the ' present ' again, to the week-end the narrator is spending at Mrs. Driffield's. It does not end there ; the time is again shifted slightly back and we come to know how he had met Rosie in America some time back.

It is a complicated pattern and it is satisfying to Mr. Ward as well as to other readers. It is not difficult to find out how that could happen. The fact is that the subject-matter just suits the pattern Maugham has adopted and it is the pattern that Mr. Ward happens to admire. The main theme is the ironical contrast in the attitudes of people towards Edward Driffield before and after his fame; it is also the author's intention to depict Rosie in a peculiar light, to prove her sweetness against the judgment of the posterity (that is, the admirers of Driffield), and to set up a contrast such varying shifts from the 'present' to the 'past' and back are very effective. Had the intention been to picture the life of Rosie Driffield, only a straightforward tale like that in *Of Human Bondage* would have been the best form to adopt; but it is a sort of contrast that is aimed at and for that purpose the form he has chosen is the best.

Maugham knows just how much the device of time-shift he can use and where. In *The Narrow Corner* he used very little of that time-shift. Mr. Ward's criticism of that novel is rather amusing :

"The Narrow Corner" is not satisfying. Once more the time-shift is used, again clumsily and without plan, yet still with the effect that is intrinsic in it as a literary trick. Once more the construction, apart from the use of the time-shift, is faulty. And a new fault makes its first really distinctive appearance in this novel, that of digression.¹

He complains that stories have been introduced which have nothing to do with the main story, that they "hold up the action of the main story and produce in the reader a sense of annoyance." Apparently the novel acts differently on the minds of different readers; it annoys Mr. Ward. He goes on to say, however, that "curiously enough, this lack of continuity and uncertainty of development do not disturb the same evenness of tone that this book shares with *Cakes and Ale*. It is curious indeed that Mr. Ward does not ask himself

¹ R. H. Ward, *W. Somerset Maugham*.

why that evenness is not disturbed by the digressions. If he had, he would have known that those digressions are not really irrelevant, they are essential for the story and Maugham has taken the help of time-shift to tell us those stories which we need know to understand the main story.

It is not difficult to guess why the story begins with the appearance of Dr. Saunders in Takana. It gives the idea of an inexorable and unavoidable fate. If Saunders had not been in Takana he could not have met Blake and Nichols and in that case they would not have had any occasion to go to Kanda-Meira where the tragedy occurs, which apparently is the main theme. It may be argued that the first portion might have been told with the help of time-shift, the story beginning with the landing of Fred Blake in Kanda-Meira. But in that case the impression would have been different. The workings of Fate could not have been so plainly shown and, moreover, the tolerant and philosophic attitude of Dr. Saunders with which the reader is made to look at the events happening later on, could not have been properly emphasised. It might have been rather clumsy and the evenness of tone might have been broken. It was not at all necessary to try a complicated pattern when the simple narrative with minimum time-shift is so effective.

There are three so-called digressions in the story, Captain Nichols's relation with his wife, the relation between Christessen and Mrs. Frith, and Fred Blake's antecedents. The necessity of the last is obvious; the antecedents of Fred Blake explain his presence in Takana where he meets Saunders. Captain Nichols's relation with his wife amuses the reader; also, it makes the character of Nichols three-dimensional. Moreover, one must not lose sight of the fact that when Captain Nichols speaks of his wife, he also tells us of his life, how he always has to live from hand to mouth, which explains how he came to take the rather shady commission; that portion, too, fits in with the main story; it helps to give a sense of

completeness. The other digression is rather difficult to explain. After the suicide of Erik, Luise says to Dr. Saunders, " what he loved in me was my mother, and he never knew that either " ; later on she says, " Erik killed himself because I had fallen short of the ideal he had made of me." That ideal was Mrs. Frith and it was necessary not to leave that figure a mere shadow.

Maugham shows his mastery in inserting these essential stories with a perfect naturalness. Nichols, feeling very well with the help of Dr. Saunders's medicine, becomes communicative and tells how he was engaged to sail the schooner. What is more natural than Dr. Saunders asking Erik about Mrs. Frith after he returns from Frith's house ? We are never allowed to peep into Fred's past until it comes out in a most natural manner ; when Fred is excited and disgusted with himself after Erik's suicide, he tells Saunders about that himself. Maugham is such a master of his medium that these stories never hold up the main story interest. The reader never has a suspicion that it is a mere literary trick that Maugham takes the help of.

We cannot but conclude that the form of *The Narrow Corner* suits the purpose of the author and that the construction of the novel is not so faulty as Mr. Ward imagines. In Maugham's recent novel, *Theatre*, too we find the same mastery of technique. The main theme is Julia's love-affair with Tom and it begins where it germinates ; the time-shift is used to tell us of the past but we get a plain narrative where we are asked to feel with the characters.

It will be ridiculous to suppose that even slight changes in the patterns Maugham has adopted for his themes, would have marred the story interest. The fact is that the forms adopted suit the themes. It is a proved fact that a reader is more at home in a plain narrative. If the author wants to make a reader identify himself with his characters, the best way is the old way. Maugham knows that ; that is why

the main themes are always dealt with plainly, as in *Of Human Bondage*, but the antecedent stories are told with the help of time-shift. That is how Maugham makes the best of his subject.

IV

Concerning Short Stories

About his taking to writing short stories considerably late in his career Maugham says:

"Though in early youth I had written a number of short stories, for a long time, twelve or fifteen years at least, occupied with the drama, I had ceased to do so, and when a journey to the South Seas unexpectedly provided me with theme that seemed to suit this medium, it was as a beginner of over forty that I wrote the story that is now called *Rain*." ¹

When he began to write the short stories he was a master story-teller and in the case of short stories therefore we have not to look for a development; we find him in *Rain* a master of his medium.

"As a writer of fiction I go back through innumerable generations, to the teller of tales round the fire in the cavern that sheltered neolithic men," Maugham remarks in his autobiography and as most of his judgments about himself are, he has hit upon the right note. His genius lies in telling stories like Maupassant and the best way to do that is in the way of simple and touching tales. He has a genius in inventing plots and his art lies in the seeming artlessness of telling those stories. "I wanted to write stories," he tells us, "that proceeded, tightly knit, in an unbroken line from the exposition to the conclusion. I saw the short story as a narrative of simple event, material or spiritual, to which, by the elimination of everything that was not essential to its

¹ Preface, *Altogether*.

elucidation, a dramatic unity could be given. I preferred to end my stories with a full-stop rather than with a struggle of dots.”¹ Maugham is inclined to simple tales told without digressions.

One has only to look at his short stories to get proofs of it. *Rain*, for example, is a simple tale about a militant clergyman who at last succumbs to the sin against which he has been fighting the whole of his life.² *Mayhew* is simpler still ; it tells of a successful man who bought a house at Capri and settled there for the rest of his life, buried among books ; it tells with a beautiful simplicity the story of a man who managed to make a simple and beautiful pattern in life.³ It is no use multiplying examples ; everyone of his stories is like that. That does not of course mean that he never uses the device of time-shift, that he always tells his story following the sequence of time. In that case he would have been regarded as a monotonous writer. He uses time-shift, but sparingly, just enough to serve his purpose ; the conclusion arrived at in the case of his novels as regards his method of using time-shift applies with equal strength here too. The main theme is told as a simple tale. There are one or two stories that make us pause and hesitate, as, say, *Before the Party*. Mr. Ward considers *Before the Party* as Maugham’s best story as it follows his idea about what a story should be, namely, “ the symbol of a circle.” The story tells how Millicent is pressed by her parents and sister to tell them how really her husband died. They were told before that it was a natural death. But her sister has heard recently from some of her friends that he had committed suicide. Millicent drops a bomb-shell ; she has murdered her husband. Her father, who had pressed her before to tell them the facts of her husband’s death and accused her for not telling the truth, now turns on her and

¹ *The Summing Up*.

² *The Trembling of a Leaf*.

³ *Cosmopolitans*.

says, "I ought never to have been told. I think it was most selfish of you." At first it seems that the main theme is the story that Millicent tells but the author's aim is to lay stress on the attitude of her family, like that in *Cakes and Ale*. In *Before the Party* the reaction on the minds of the hearers of Millicent's story is the main theme.

In his short stories we find him making a merit of one of his limitations. He knows that he cannot write entirely objectively; he puts much of himself in his writings. This practice is developed in his short stories where the technique he adopts is mostly the use of the first person singular. In some cases he does not use the first person singular directly but substitutes a name for "I". He has done that in *Rain*, for example, where, in the original sketch of the story, we find that he had intended to write in the first person singular. The short stories in the books *First Person Singular* and *Cosmopolitans* are all written in the first person singular; the rest of the short stories have been written in a method which is only a variation of that. In the case of his novels we have seen the gradual development of this device; in the case of his short stories we find the use of the completely developed device. It must be mentioned that in one or two of the stories he has not been able to keep the air of verisimilitude; we wonder, for example, how he could obtain the particulars of the scene between Mr. and Mrs. Albert Forrester and Mrs. Bulfinch in *The Creative Impulse*.¹ In other cases we can well believe that he got it somehow from some source or other, but in this case that would not do. Mrs. Albert Forrester at the end of the story intentionally conceals the facts of that interview and the narrator who could only know from that source naturally could not know the facts. Anyhow it is a rare slip; generally speaking Maugham has made a very successful use of this device.

¹ *First Person Singular*.

In his short stories just as in his novels we find the impress of his training as a dramatist. The stories begin at dramatic moments; incidents which develop the story are joined and stories are told without digressions in a concise manner. From the very beginning they demand the reader's attention and their greatest merit is that the interest never flags; that is what makes him one of the best story-tellers of England. He has followed a method, for which his training as a dramatist was a great asset, which has been followed by all the great story-tellers of the world. He imparts a sense of completeness, a perfect pattern which has always appealed to the reading public. Maugham's aim coincides with that of the great masters of short story, except perhaps Chekov; it coincides, for example, with that of Stephan Zweig. "Conciseness," remarks Zweig, "has always seemed to me to be the most essential problem in art. To fit his destiny to a man so nicely as to leave no vacuum, to inclose him as irradiantly as amber does the fly and yet the while to preserve every detail of his being, has, of all tasks, ever been the dearest to me."¹ Maugham has been very successful in attaining what Zweig reveals to be his aim.

V

The Source

One peculiar thing about Maugham is that the source of his plots is his characters and his characters he gets from real life. There is nothing strange in modelling one's characters on real personages; every writer does that. But the speciality of Maugham lies in the fact that the sketches he makes of the characters suggest the plots to him into which they can be fitted. This specially applies to his short stories,

¹ Foreword, *Kaleidoscope*,

We could never have guessed his method of writing stories if he had not told us himself. He tells us how he came to write the story *Rain*, in the preface to *Altogether* :

I was travelling from Honolulu to Pago-Pago and hoping they might at some time be of service, I jotted down, as usual, my impressions of such of my fellow-passengers as attracted my attention. This is what I said of Miss Thompson : ' Plump, pretty in a coarse fashion, perhaps not more than twenty-seven. She wore a white dress and a large white hat, long white boots from which the calves bulged in cotton stockings.' There had been a raid on the Red Light District in Honolulu just before we sailed, and the gossip of the ship spread the report that she was making the journey to escape arrest. My notes go on : ' W. The missionary. He was a tall thin man, long limbs loosely jointed, he had hollow cheeks and high cheek bones. He had cadaverous air and a look of suppressed fire.'

Maugham's notes on the wife of the missionary tells us of her extreme alertness. She told Maugham that W. was a missionary and that he never quailed to go long distances on even rough seas in a canoe to do a duty. " She spoke of the depravity of the natives in a voice which nothing could hush, but with a vehement, unctuous horror, telling me of their marriage customs which were obscene beyond description. She said, when they first went it was impossible to find a single good girl in any of the villages. She inveighed against dancing." Maugham tells us that he talked with the missionary and his wife but once, and with Miss Thompson not at all. But the opinions he formed about those people suggested to him a fine plot. Here is his note for the story :

A prostitute, flying from Honolulu after a raid, lands at Pago-Pago. There lands also a missionary and his wife. Also the narrator. All are obliged to stay there owing to an outbreak of measles. The missionary finding out her profession persecutes her. He reduces her to misery, shame and repentance ; he has no mercy on her. He induces the governor to order her return to Honolulu. One morning he is found with his throat cut by his own hand ; she is once more radiant and self-possessed. She looks at men and scornfully exclaims, " Dirty pigs."

The look of suppressed fire in the missionary, together with the stories told by his wife about his militant attitude towards

sin, suggested to Maugham the missionary's part in the story. Maugham did not like his attitude and his knowledge of the psychology, as taught by the modern school, told him that the missionary's militant attitude against sin may be due to a subconscious leaning towards it which may get the better of the conscious self at any moment; his fertile imagination did the rest.

"If you are a story-teller," he remarks elsewhere, "any curious person you meet has a way of suggesting a story, and incidents that to others will seem quite haphazard have a way of presenting themselves to you with the pattern your natural instinct has imposed on them." In *Rain* we find a typical illustration of that. Maugham's habit have always been to use his keen power of observation and jot down the characteristic of his fellow creatures that their look suggests to him and the incidents that suit such characters come naturally. The sketches contained in his book *On a Chinese Screen* are all fit to be developed into stories. Maugham remarks in the preface to that book, "This is not a book at all, but the material for a book." But what it contains is not material for one book but many books. *The Rolling Stone*, *The Cabinet Minister*, *The Servants of God*, *Fear*, etc., are all undeveloped or nearly developed stories. There is very little chance of these stories being developed but at least two of these sketches have provided Maugham with the foundations of his great novels, *The Painted Veil* and *The Narrow Corner*. We get a sketch of the original of the Mother Superior of *The Painted Veil* here :

It was the Mother Superior who received me, a placid sweet-faced lady with a soft voice and an accent which told me that she came from the south of France. She showed me the orphans who were in her charge, busy at the lace-making which the nuns had taught them, smiling shyly; and she showed me the hospital where lay soldiers suffering from dysentery, typhoid, and malaria.....¹

¹ *The Nun*.

With pride they showed me their poor little chapel with its tawdry statue of the Blessed Virgin ; its paper flowers, and its gaudy shoddy decoration ; for those faithful hearts, alas ! were possessed of singularly bad taste. ¹

We get here the rough sketch of the nuns with their great heart, simplicity and ignorance, which was developed in *The Painted Veil*. The convent with the hospital where the soldiers are treated becomes the seat of a human drama for a time and occupies a large portion of the book. Maugham added Kitty, Walter, Townsend and a few other minor characters to it and connecting them built a plot. From the experience we have already had about Maugham's method we may safely guess that even those characters he took from life.

The same thing happens in the case of *The Narrow Corner*. The book depends a great deal on the character of Dr. Saunders, if not entirely, and the first sketch of him we get in *On a Chinese Screen*. The description runs thus :

Dr. Saunders was a little greyhaired man, with a high colour and a snub nose which gave him a strangely impudent expression. He had a large sensual mouth and when he laughed, which he did very often, he showed decayed and discoloured teeth ; when he laughed his little blue eyes wrinkled in a curious fashion and then he looked the very picture of malice. He was not on the register. But it was evident that he was a very clever doctor and the Chinese had great faith in him. ²

This is the basis on which Maugham built up that unique character which suggested to him the incidents. The doctor's sense of humour with the tang of mischievousness impressed the author. In the sketch itself we get a taste of Saunders's puckish humour and in *The Narrow Corner* this has been developed to its fullest possibilities.

This is Maugham's method of writing. In the last two cases, naturally, we cannot know how exactly Maugham connected different characters with the incidents as we have not been given the sketches of all the characters, which, the

¹ *The Sights of the Town.*

² *The Stranger.*

facts about *Rain* suggest, may be found in his notebook. But that this is the method is clearly revealed by the author in the case of *Rain*; and these hints about the source of characters and plots in *The Painted Veil* and *The Narrow Corner*, which we get in the sketches in *On a Chinese Screen*, are additional confirmations if they are not proofs by themselves.

CHAPTER V

THE WORLD OF SOMERSET MAUGHAM

I

Preliminary—the Ideas and Opinions which Help to Mould the People of Maugham's World

A writer generally sees his characters from a particular angle of vision. His characters often bear the impress of his temperament and opinions. "I have seen the world through my own idiosyncrasies," Maugham admits in *The Summing Up*. It will make it easier to understand Maugham's world if we first make an estimate of his idiosyncrasies.

We are not here to judge whether his ideas and opinions are right or not; we are concerned with them in so far as they have affected his work. One of such ideas is that "There is not much to choose between men. They are all a hotchpotch of greatness and littleness, of virtue and of vice, of nobility and baseness."¹ He has found that out as a result of experience. Trying to probe into a character he has often brought out its fundamental baseness and this has made people call him a cynic. His defence against that attack is a clear indication of his attitude towards his characters:

I have been called cynical. I have been accused of making men out worse than they are. I do not think I have done this. All I have done is to bring into prominence certain traits that any writers shut their eyes to. I think what has chiefly struck me in human beings is their lack of consistency. I have never seen people all of a piece. It has amazed me that the most incongruous traits should exist in the same person and for all that yield a plausible harmony. I have often asked myself how characteristics,

¹ *The Summing Up*.

seemingly irreconcilable, can exist in the same person. I have known crooks who were capable of self-sacrifice, sneak-thieves who were sweet-natured and harlots for whom it was a point of honour to give good value for money. The censure that has from time to time been passed on me is due perhaps to the fact that I have not expressly condemned what was bad in the characters of my invention and praised what was good. It must be a fault in me that I am not gravely shocked at the sins of others unless they personally affect me, even when they do I have learnt at last generally to excuse them. I think I could be justly condemned if I saw only people's faults and were blind to their virtues. There is nothing more beautiful than goodness and it has pleased me very often to show how much of it there is in persons who by common standards would be relentlessly condemned. I have shown it because I have seen it. I am touched when I see the goodness of the wicked and I am willing enough to shrug a tolerant shoulder at their wickedness. I am not my brother's keeper.

This attitude of his has moulded his characters in a particular way. He has shown hidden baseness in apparently good people and drawn in bold relief the goodness of his wicked characters which have thus become more interesting.

One strange fact cannot but strike a reader of Maugham ; it is his preference for obscure characters. In his autobiography he has told us the reason for that :

I have been more concerned with the obscure than with the famous. They are more often themselves. They have had no need to create a figure to protect themselves from the world to impress it. Their idiosyncrasies have had more chance to develop in the limited circle of their activity and since they have never been in the public eye it has never occurred to them that they have anything to conceal. They display their oddities. it has never struck them that they are odd. The great man is too often all of a piece ; it is the little man that is a bundle of contradictory elements. He is inexhaustible. You never come to the end of surprise he has in store for you.

That is the reason of Maugham's characters being " little men " ; he has not in his novels any character whom he has represented to be a great man—a prominent statesman, for example.

Maugham, therefore, is interested in the 'little men' for their oddities, and paints his characters with one or more eccentricities. There is no normal man or woman in his works. In his opinion there is no such thing. He refers once to an incident of his student days in the medical school when one day his professor, observing him vainly trying to find out a certain nerve in its proper place, remarked, "You see the normal is the rarest in the world."

"And though he spoke of anatomy," Maugham tells us, "he might have spoken with equal truth of man. The casual observation impressed itself upon me as many a profounder one has not and all the years that have passed since then, with the increasing knowledge of human nature which they have brought, have only strengthened my conviction of its truth. I have met a hundred men who seemed perfectly normal, only to find in them presently an idiosyncrasy so marked as to put them almost in a class by themselves. It has entertained me not a little to discover the hidden oddities of men to all appearances most ordinary. I have been often amazed to come upon a hideous depravity in men who you would have sworn were perfectly commonplace. I have at last sought the normal man as a precious work of art."¹

These views of the author we must take into consideration when we examine the people of Maugham's world.

II

The Types

Maugham in his autobiography sums up his experience of human character in a way which writers like Ben Jonson have done. He points out :

One reads that no one exactly resembles anyone else, and that every man is unique, and in a way this is true, but it is a truth easy to exaggerate :

¹ *The Normal Man, On a Chinese Screen.*

in practice men are very much alike. They are divided into comparatively few types. The circumstances mould them in the same way.

At the very first glance at the world he has created, we find such distinct types—types that he finds in the real world.

The most distinct of the types is the typical Government official in the Malay Archipelago and the South Sea islands. They are generally in love with the country and the work they are engaged in and that is the common trait among them. Walker in *Mackintosh*, Morton in *Virtue*, Warburton in *The Outstation*, Gruyter in *The Vessel of Wrath*, and George Moon of *The Back of Beyond* are only a few of them. The next type of note is the bigoted clergyman like the Vicar of Blackstable in *Of Human Bondage*, Davidson of *Rain*, or Jones of *The Vessel of Wrath*. Then there are the snobs like Warburton in *The Outstation*, Clay of *Our Betters*, the Blands in *The Alien Corn*, etc.; the interesting rogues like Strickland in *The Moon and Sixpence*, Ginger Ted in *The Vessel of Wrath*, Nichols of *The Narrow Corner*; the characters who inspire awe and admiration like Dirk Stroeve of *The Moon and Sixpence*, Walter of *The Painted Veil*, Erik Christessen of *The Narrow Corner*, Sheppey of *Sheppey*.

His women can be divided into three main types. There are some devoted and constant wives like Ata in *The Moon and Sixpence*, or the Manchu princess in *The Painted Veil*. But these are very rare cases. Generally Maugham's women are hetairas whose prominent trait is sexual blandishment, such as Bertha Craddock in *Mrs. Craddock*, Rosie Driffield in *Cakes and Ale*, Luise Frith in *The Narrow Corner*, Julia in *Theatre*, etc.; as an extreme case of this type we have Mildred in *Of Human Bondage* who turns prostitute. Then there is the other type of woman, the motherly; Miss Ley of *Mrs. Craddock*, second Mrs. Driffield of *Cakes and Ale*, Sally of *Of Human Bondage*, Mrs. Frith of *The Narrow Corner*, etc., fall in this category. In them we find sympathy and kindness

which are their prominent traits as sex is the prominent trait in the other type.

These are the most prominent types among Maugham's characters. "The slightly abnormal circumstances," he shrewdly guesses, "in which men live in the countries where life is primitive or the environment alien to them, emphasize their ordinariness so that it gains a character of its own; and when they are in themselves extraordinary, which of course they sometimes are, the want of usual restraints permits them to develop their kinks with a freedom that in the more civilized communities can be hardly won."¹ But except in one or two cases (like that of Warburton in *The Outstation*) Maugham has not been very particular in showing kinks in only those people who live outside the restraints of civilization.

We can find types in every writer. Types occur again and again without any variation in mediocre writers. When a writer knows his business, he does not allow the same types to recur—he individualises them sufficiently to avoid giving an impression of monotony. Maugham knows his business. When we examine his characters minutely we find that no two characters are the same. There is always some diversity in apparent similarity. He has made every character unique.

III

Infinite Varieties

No one exactly resembles any one else in Maugham. There are the types but even a superficial probing reveals the fact that a character never recurs in Maugham. We shall examine the main types one by one. Let us take the typical Government officials first.

¹ *The Summing Up*.

Walker,¹ Morton² and Warburton³ (to speak only of the characters already mentioned) have all the distinct stamp of the typical Government official on them. They all love the people they govern; all of them love the constructive works they are doing. But Walker is a cunning, coarse and jovial fellow; Morton is shy, just the opposite of Walker; and Warburton is a typical snob. Warburton is never jovial like Walker; he never demonstrates his love for the natives, he is stiff and formal. There is Townsend in *The Painted Veil* who does not resemble any of them in any trait except efficiency in doing his office work. He is a selfish man, vain and pleasure-seeking. Morton tries to win Margery because he is honestly infatuated by her but Townsend makes a conquest of Kitty to satisfy his egoistic, pleasure-seeking self. Then there is George Moon⁴ who resembles Warburton slightly in his aloofness. But he is never so stiff; he is not a snob; moreover, he is tolerant, which Warburton is not. There is a number of such characters; but Maugham has never created two Government officials with the same ingredients. They all develop different kinks.

Maugham's clergymen are generally bigots; it is natural enough as they were almost all of them modelled on his uncle, the original of the Vicar of Blackstable. But there is always some shade of difference. Davidson⁵ is a militant clergyman, full of fire which none of the other clergymen have. The Vicar of Blackstable⁶ has a certain meanness and fear of death which mark him out from others. There is no sincerity in him; he makes a show of religious fervour. This cannot be said of the other clergymen. Davidson is anything

Mackintosh, The Trembling of a Leaf.
Virtue, First Person Singular.
The Outstation, Altogether.
The Back of Beyond, Ah King.
Rain, The Trembling of a Leaf.
Of Human Bondage.

but insincere (we must of course leave out the subconscious in him). Rev. Jones of *The Vessel of Wrath* has a sympathy for the sinners under his taciturnity and he takes it to be an unpleasant duty to press Gruyter to deport Ginger Ted. He is a Davidson but without his vindictiveness and with a great deal of humane feeling. Davidson thinks himself a flail of God and like Chesterton's clergyman in his story *The Flail of God*, takes upon himself the task of judging his fellow-creatures. He is obsessed with a peculiar conception of his religion and his duty to uphold it. He has forgotten the essence of his religion, pity, tolerance and forbearance, which overflowed in the Founder of his religion. He never really feels a trace of sympathy for Miss Thomson. But Jones is different. He wants to get Ginger Ted out of the island, not to punish him but just for the good of the natives, specially the girls who can never withstand Ted's advances. Moreover, Jones has one element in him which none of the other clergymen possess—it is humour, though not a very large quantity of it. "My sister is a determined woman," he says to Gruyter with a twinkle in his eyes, "From that night they spent on the island he never had a chance" (*i.e.*, of escaping).

Maugham's rogues are of a special brand (which is one of the reasons why he is not in favour with the purists). "A defect in my character is that I enjoy the company of those, however depraved, who can give me a Roland for my Oliver," he says in *The Moon and Sixpence* and that explains his preference for the pleasant rogues he has created, who are condemned by the general public. The common trait is that they are attractive in one way or other. Strickland has an unconcerned air and a peculiar sense of humour, Captain Nichols a quick wit, and Walker has a coarse humour of his own. But as in the case of other types, here too we never find any repetition. The three characters mentioned, who are prominent among his rogues, differ greatly from one another. These are characters whom Maugham likes but there are others

whom he admires—angelic characters like Dirk Stroeve,¹ Erik Christessen,² Sheppey,³ Salvatore,⁴ etc. They are so good that they never suspect anybody. But with their goodness are mixed other traits which make them different personalities. Dirk Stroeve is a buffoon and is laughed at. Erik Christessen has a romantic soul, but we never laugh at him. We wish with Ted Blake that there were some more like him. Sheppey is a character who is not passively good like others. He does not only think good of others, but like Christ, whose life he tries to follow, devotes his life to the good of others. Salvatore is the simplest of them ; he is the picture of an honest, simple soul, which is commoner on earth than the others.

It is the same story in the case of the other types. His hetairas, his mothers, his devoted wives, his snobs are types but the characters are individuals too. They are so much individualised that a superficial study fail to establish a similarity between, say, Bertha Craddock and Julia Lambert, Miss Ley and Sally, Thornton Clay and Warburton or Ata and the Manchu Princess of *The Painted Veil*. In the world of Somerset Maugham the typical and the individual characteristics are inextricably blended together and that is why they ring true.

IV

The Canvas and the Brush

An author's canvas is as difficult to work on as that of the painter. It is difficult in both cases to give full-length, three-dimensional portraits ; but it is no difficulty to a genius. He produces the illusion of completeness which is so satisfying. Maugham's characters are never cardboard characters,

¹ *The Moon and Sixpence.*

² *The Narrow Corner.*

³ *Sheppey.*

⁴ *Salvatore, Cosmopolitans.*

In his novels he builds up bit by bit characters which leave a lasting impression on the mind of the reader. He has created, for instance, Mildred in *Of Human Bondage* with her meanness and masochistic temperament, and with her lack of humour and sense of decency and gratitude, gradually with the help of episodes. There, however, he gets the opportunity of utilising hundreds of pages to unfold the character. In his short stories, and more so in his dramas, he has to condense; he cannot get so much space. Still in *Mackintosh*, for example, he has time to impart a lasting impression of Walker's coarse humour, his cunning, his love for the natives and his great heart. Even in such stories he gets some space. But there are short stories he has written which cover only three or four pages and it is there that we find his mastery of the brush displayed to the greatest extent. There he cannot show all the sides of a character, he can only lay stress on one or two of the dominating traits. Still he has to produce the illusion of completeness; he has to make them three-dimensional by showing one or two of the dimensions only. Take for instance *The Promise*.¹ Maugham paints there a character in Elizabeth Varmont who has always been unfaithful to her series of husbands and has entered the divorce court many times, but who sticks to her promise to Peter, whom she loves, that he would have his release whenever he wanted it. She generously offers to provide him with the grounds for divorcing her so that he may marry Barbara Canton with whom he has fallen in love. Within the short space allowed to him by the *Cosmopolitan Magazine* Maugham has successfully given the impression of a strong, honest, upright and sweet woman. The illusion of completeness is intact.

In novels and short stories, however, the author can put in his own comments and thus has an advantage over the dramatist in filling up a character. Maugham as a playwright

¹ *The Cosmopolitans*.

has to depend on bold touches to materialise a character and he comes out as successful as in his novels and short stories. In *The Circle*, for instance, he gives a skeleton of Arnold's character in the first half a dozen lines. He is irritated by slight causes such as an almost imperceptible disorder in the arrangement of the chairs. A few incisive lines tell us all about Lady Kitty, her shallowness, her ignorance, her self-complacent vanity:

Lady Kitty. I think it is a beautiful chair.

Porteous. What do you call it, Hepplewhite ?

Arnold. No, Sheraton.

Lady Kitty. Oh, I know. "The School for Scandal."

Again,—

Lady Kitty. (Touching Elizabeth's frock) Callot ?

Elizabeth. No, Worth.

Lady Kitty. I knew it was either Worth or Callot.

Four words have been enough for Maugham to reveal the tender side of two characters:

Teddie. Elizabeth ?

Elizabeth. What ?

Teddie. Bless you.

Elizabeth. Idiot.

There cannot be a greater mastery over brush shown. Naturally, Maugham has to deal with the predominating traits of the characters but he takes care that the characters seem like real people with three dimensions and not made up of Jonsonian humours.

From the very first Maugham had been very steady with the brush. Even in *Liza of Lambeth* we never get any fault in the character drawing, they never seem improbable. The characters have been drawn by a bold and steady hand ; Tom with his timid, sweet and forgiving nature, Liza with her bubbling life growing gradually lifeless under the sneers of her neighbours, Jim with his animal vigour and sensuality, boldness and certain sense of honour and responsibility (unlike

Townsend of *The Painted Veil*), stand before us full length and with sound limbs. When we compare those early novels with his mature works, however, we find a subtle difference. His first products were traced in broad lines; he had not yet had the experience of the different strata that may be found in a character. Liza, Tom or Jim are made of one piece; it is the same case with Alec of *The Explorer* and in fact with the characters in all the novels up to *Of Human Bondage*. Even in *Of Human Bondage* we find characters made of one piece; there are no contradictory elements shown in most of the characters. Philip is good, there is no baseness shown in him, so also in the case of Thorpe Athelny. Mildred is detestable and we do not get any redeeming feature in her. But there are one or two minor characters like Cronshaw or Fanny who are not of one piece like the rest. Cronshaw is wise but he never follows his wisdom. He is shrewd, yet in some matters he is foolish. In him, weakness of will counteracts his wisdom. Fanny, with her ill temper and the love she hides in her breast for Philip, is another such problem. But still we do not yet get a striking contrast of contradictory elements as we get, say, in Burton in *A Friend in Need*.¹ He is described as "one of the best" by those who know him. But as the author says in the story "we are a haphazard bundle of inconsistent qualities." The chief thing that struck the narrator was Burton's kindliness; but a story which he got out of him made him modify his opinion a little. Once a man came to Burton for employment. Burton told him that he would give him work if he succeeded in swimming across a strong current which he himself had done in youth. He knew that the man had ruined his constitution by drink and dissipation and that "the current round the beacon was more than he could manage" and he admitted at last that he had no vacancy in his office. No wonder the narrator was a trifle shocked.

¹ *Cosmopolitans*.

Or take another, say, Nichols in *The Narrow Corner*. He is shrewd and bold. He is not afraid of any person, neither does he turn a hair when he faces death on an angry sea ; but he has a superstitious awe of his wife who finds him out wherever he hides himself ; he turns green when at last he sees her coming up the stairs of a restaurant in Singapore where he is talking with Dr. Saunders.

This difference in portraiture is due to his mature experience of human beings. He was not aware before of the different strata in a person. He dealt then with the superficial. " I had not yet learnt, " he says in *The Moon and Sixpence*, " how contradictory is human nature ; I did not know how much pose there is in the sincere, how much baseness in the noble, nor how much goodness in the reprobate " ; " I expected then people to be more of a piece than I do now, and I was distressed to find so much vindictiveness in so charming a creature. I did not realise how motley are the qualities that go to make up a human being. Now I am well aware that pettiness and grandeur, malice and charity, hatred and love, can find place side by side in the same human heart." It is the result of the experience he had by travels and we get the products of this experience in a marked manner from about the period *The Moon and Sixpence* was written. Mrs. Strickland, Blanche Stroeve and Dirk Stroeve in that book are such bundles of contradictions. After that not only we get a series of characters who are at the very first glance revealed to be made up of contradictory elements but we seldom get characters which are otherwise.

There are critics who have complained of Maugham's lack of pity. Harold Williams, for example, in his book *Modern English Writers*, says of Maugham that " he does not appear to have acquired a strong sympathy with human beings." Such a remark only shows how superficial a critic can be. Maugham's slightly cynical attitude makes the critics judge like that. They think apparently that sentimentality

is the best expression of pity. If they had tried to look into the attitude of Maugham, it would not have been difficult for them to change their opinion. Beneath such cynical attitude is always a deeply flowing stream of pity. We find it in abundance in his first novel. When he bitterly portrays the callousness of Mrs. Kemp and others at the time of Liza's death, we are reminded of Hood's lines,

" One more unfortunate
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death !"

The brush which paints such scenes cannot be unsympathetic.

In fact Maugham has painted his world with a great deal of sympathy but his apathy to sentimentality gives it a coating of cynicism. His world is made up of characters whose oddness gives them the individuality they possess; the Thorpe Athelnies,¹ the Walters,² the Dirk Stroeves,³ the Nicholsons,⁴ the Edward Barnards,⁵ the Elizabeth Vermonths,⁶ the Louises,⁷ and others live in the reader's mind for their oddities. But they are never unsympathetically painted. Maugham seldom is unsympathetic to human failings (except in one or two cases like that of say Townsend in *The Painted Veil*). The complaint against him is due probably to the fact that he has not painted in crimson the miseries of people, like Galsworthy, Gissing and others. But sympathy and pity cannot be expected to take the same channel of expression always. In Maugham's case at first the channel was an attitude of cynicism which afterwards gave place to that of uncommon tolerance.⁸

Of Human Bondage.

The Painted Veil.

The Moon and Six pence.

The Narrow Corner.

The Fall of Edward Bernard, The Trembling of a Leaf.

The Promise, Cosmopolitans.

Louise, Cosmopolitans.

Vide Chapter VII, " In Quest of Peace."

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRIT OF PUCK

“ My agents pressed me to write humorously but for this I had no aptitude,” Maugham modestly admits in his autobiography. But it is difficult to reconcile this statement with the fact that he has written “ roarily funny ”¹ plays like *Jack Straw*. The explanation lies in the peculiar quality of Maugham’s humour. It is better appreciated by an audience than a reader. It is better ‘ acted ’ than read.

This is the reason why his novels do not seem to be as full of humour as his plays seem to the audience. There are scenes in his novels which reveal the humorous dramatist but a reader without a keen sense of the ridiculous may be expected to exclaim like Fred Blake, “ What’s there to laugh at ! ”² Let us take a little scene from his latest novel *Theatre*. Julia is very much hurt because her husband is rather cold.

. She throws her hands to heaven.

“ I might be squint-eyed and hump-backed. I might be fifty. Am I so unattractive as all that ? It’s so humiliating to have to beg for love. Misery, misery. ”

“ That was a very good movement, dear. As if you were throwing a cricket ball. Remember that,” says Michael.

Only good acting can bring out the humour of the scene fully. Here is another scene from the same book. Julia is angry because Langton has managed to get rid of Michael by providing him with a contract in America.

¹ Sir John Squire, *Illustrated London News*, Feb. 12, 1938.

² *The Narrow Corner*.

Julia goes up to him and stares into his eyes searchingly.

"Have you done all this to get me to stay on for another year? Have you broken my heart and ruined my whole life just to keep me in your rotten Theatre?"

"I swear I haven't.....Damn it, I would not play you a dirty trick like that."

"You liar, you filthy liar."

"I swear it is the truth"

"Prove it then," she said violently.

"How can I prove it? You know I'm decent really."

"Give me fifteen pounds a week and I'll believe you."

It is not that we do not get amused when we read them but the fact is that the stage could have done better justice to such scenes; they could have made the audience roar. A scene from *Of Human Bondage* and another from the *The Explorer* will make this point clear. Here is a scene from the daily life in the Hospital where Philip worked.

Once a woman came who was a member of the ballet at a famous music hall. She looked fifty, but gave her age as twenty-eight. She rolled her eyes round the young men, with a long sweep of her painted eyelashes, and flashed her yellow teeth at them. She spoke with a cockney accent but with an affectation of refinement which made every word a feast of fun.

"It's what they call a winter cough," Dr Tyrell tells her gravely. "A great many middle-aged women have it"

"Well I never! That is a nice thing to say to a lady. No one ever called me middle-aged before." She opened her eyes wide and cocked her head on one side looking at him with indescribable archness

"That is the disadvantage of our profession," said he. "It forces us sometimes to be ungallant" She took the prescription and gave him one last, luscious smile.

"You will come and see me dance, dearie, won't you?"

"I will indeed."

The scene from *The Explorer* tells us how Dick Lomas and Julia Crowley get engaged.

"Well," says Dick, "I can't suffer the humiliation of another refusal. Why don't you propose to me?"

"What cheek!" she cried.

.....

"Well?" he said.

"I shan't," she answered.

"Then I shall continue to be a brother to you."

She got up and curtsied.

"Mr. Lomas, I am a widow, twenty-nine years of age, and extremely eligible. My maid is a treasure, and my dressmaker is charming. I'm clever enough to laugh at your jokes and not so learned as to know where they come from."

"Really you are very long-winded. I said it all in four words."

"You evidently put it too briefly, since you were refused," she smiled.

She stretched out her hands and he took them.

"I think I'll do it by post," she said. "It'll sound so much more becoming."

"You'd better get it over now."

"You know I don't really want to marry you a bit. I'm only doing it to please."

"I admire your unselfishness."

"You will say yes if I ask you?"

"I refuse to commit myself."

"Obstinate beast," she cried.

She curtsied once more, as well as she could since he was firmly holding her hands.

"Sir, I have the honour to demand your hand in marriage."

He bowed elaborately.

"Madam, I have much pleasure in acceding to your request."

A good actress could have made the ogling of the impudent music-hall artist very amusing. The elaborate curtsies of Julia and Dick would have looked wonderfully comic to a twentieth-century audience. The scene in *Theatre* in which Julia Lambert mimics Lydia Mayne alone in her room fails to bring any smile to the reader. "Julia began to speak in Lydia's voice, with the lazy drawl that made every remark she uttered sound faintly obscene." A reader has every difficulty in imagining this scene. But it would have been a

howling scene in a theatre, provided, of course, there could be found an actress to act that.

When we examine his plays, it is not difficult to see why he has so long fascinated the London audience which likes a good laugh. Barret Clark tells a story how the director found in the rehearsal of *Lady Frederick* that "it was necessary to delete many lines which would be sure to arouse laughter because too many laughs in quick succession might destroy the continuity of the action."¹ Whether this anecdote be true or not, it does justice to Maugham's almost uncanny power of amusing his audience which has drawn an unwilling admiration even from a critic like Sawyer.²

In *The Circle* we find the best expression of this power of Maugham; what was too flashy has been toned down by a mature hand, what was only a cluster of verbal fencing, quips and jests, now deepens into a more genuine laughter. The drama opens with the exhibition of an oddity in a person which never fails to amuse. And a caricature, as is only natural, shines better on the stage than on paper. When we read the first few lines of the drama they look rather colourless.

(Arnold comes and slightly alters the position of one of the chairs and addresses the footman.)

Arnold. George, who is supposed to look after this room?

George. I don't know, Sir.

Arnold. I wish, when they dust, they'd take care to replace the things exactly as they were before.

Apparently there is nothing humorous in a man's just exasperation but the footman's unperturbedness shows off Arnold's 'idiosyncrasy'—his proneness to be irritated at trifles—in a manner which cannot but amuse the audience. The audience is at once put into a laughing vein and is prepared for the other tricks which Maugham has up his sleeve.

¹ *A Study of Contemporary Drama.*

² *The Comedy of Manners from Sheridan to Maugham.*

Verbal badinage is another thing that helps to keep up the atmosphere of fun and laughter in *The Circle*. The play is full of it. Here are some of them:

Elizabeth. Damn.

Arnold. (Good humouredly) I wish you would not say that Elizabeth.....I should have thought you could say " Oh bother " or something like that.

Elizabeth. But that would not express my sentiments. Besides at the speech day, when you were giving away the prizes, you said there were no synonyms in the English language.

Arnold. There are no synonyms in the English language.

Elizabeth. In that case, I shall be regretfully forced to continue to say damn whenever I feel like it.

Another :

Clive. How old are you ?

Elizabeth. Twenty-five.

Clive. I'm never cross with a woman under thirty.

Elizabeth. Oh, then I've got ten years.

Clive. Mathematics ?

Elizabeth. No. Paint.

They amuse even a reader ; but it is very easy to imagine how such sallies of wit when spoken sharply, with the additional advantages of expression with the face and movements, can become more amusing.

There are other means which Maugham has employed to infuse mirth into his audience. He has created a jolly person like Elizabeth whose mirth is infectious. The other method, that of caricature, we shall deal with presently in detail.

One of the easiest methods by which a humorous writer can amuse his admirers is caricature. It has always been found to be infallible. But there is caricature and caricature. There is a kind of caricature which is meant to be a caricature, a presentation of obvious deformities of body or of mind, which generally tends to become malicious and reveal a certain coarseness of mind on the part of the writer. This coarseness appeals

to the mind of a coarse reader or a coarse audience ; but a cultured man cannot appreciate it. The best caricature is the good-humoured caricature, a caricature done by giving a good-natured twist when depicting a character. It does not arouse the boisterous mirth which the first kind of caricature does ; the reader or the audience, specially when they are cultured people, smile at the caricature presented but they smile with sympathy. A coarse man will laugh to see a man tumble through no fault of his ; it is mirth of this nature that is roused by the first kind of caricature. " It is another thing," as Bergson remarks, " to tumble because you were intent upon a star. It was certainly a star at which Don Quixote was gazing. " ¹ A cultured reader's heart goes to Don Quixote though he may laugh at him. This is the best kind of caricature. We never feel any repulsion for such a character though we do so in the case of the first sort. In Maugham we find both and an examination of that reveals an interesting development of his mind.

In his first novel, *Liza of Lambeth*, Mrs. Kemp is a caricature of the first type. She is oblivious of everything except her own interest and what is strange is that " her own interest " does not include her daughter. She is always complaining about her gout and thus does not fail to be a little funny, but it is a caricature of the worst type and when Maugham paints the selfish woman rejoicing that she had insured Liza and so would not suffer any material loss we feel disgusted. Mrs. Kemp does not supply an innocent unadulterated mirth. In *Mrs. Craddock* we have a caricature of the worthless country nobility, the set including Mr. Bacot, General Hancock, Mrs. Branderton and others ; Miss Glover is also the caricature of a prudish, bigoted woman. We can feel Maugham's malicious amusement in such caricatures ; we find that also in his hit at the general British public which swallows Edward

¹ *Laughter.*

Craddock's sentimental election stunt. In his great novel *Of Human Bondage*, too, we find traces of such malicious caricature,—in his depiction of the narrow-minded Vicar of Blackstable, the picture of his school life including the ignorant and narrow-minded teachers, and in the character of Heyward. But here we find an inkling of the change in Maugham's mind. In Heyward we find a worthless, shallow character, but Maugham does not give the impression that Heyward is absolutely disgusting as would have been very easy and natural to do; Maugham manages to make the reader feel, if not sympathy, at least a little tolerance.

It must be noted that all of these caricatures are not amusing; some of them are satirical pictures without the least attempt at humour. This is due to a mood of bitterness in Maugham's mind which changes with his maturity.

To this period belongs the satirical play *Our Betters*; Maugham has been merciless to the foppish dandies like Clay who take scrupulous care about their dress and accent. The general tone of the play is of merciless caricature. It is of course not quite right to identify the tone of a play with the mood of the dramatist. A dramatist has to look to his audience. What with the effect of the Boer War and what with the rise of the school of Shaw the satirical plays came into vogue in the beginning of this century; and if this play had been an isolated piece we would have been bound to judge it as a drama *à la mode*. But it is not an isolated piece; it fits in, with the similar plays that had preceded, with a distinct attitude of Maugham which we also find in his novels. The Maugham of this period has a bitter and unsatisfied mind.

But gradually this changes and Maugham learns to take a tolerant view of people. In 1919 Maugham produced *Rain* and *Moon and Sixpence*, and these two reveal the two currents flowing in his mind. Davidson in *Rain* is a satirical caricature but Dirk Stroeve in *The Moon and Sixpence* is a sympathetic caricature; he resembles Don Quixote. He can never think

ill of other people and for that he suffers ; his eyes are fixed at the stars, that is why he stumbles. A coarse mind finds him a butt of ridicule ; he is a buffoon. Once when he describes with realistic details how he had taken a purge his wife is disgusted with his childishness:

“ You seem to like making a fool of yourself,” she says.

Dirk Stroeve is dismayed and answers, “ Sweetheart, have I vexed you ? I’ll never take another. It was only because I was bilious. I lead a very sedentary life. I don’t take enough exercise. For three days I hadn’t.....”

Indeed his foolishness cannot but incite laughter. But our heart goes out to him even when we are laughing at his foolish childishness. Maugham has created a fool whose foolishness is very touching. This heralds a distinct change in Maugham. From now on his caricatures are never bitter ; they are solely for the sake of amusement. Of course we cannot expect to find the appeal to the heart in every one of such funny portraits, but what we find is that the sting has been taken away, there is no further satirical motive. In *The Circle* we find two caricatures, one in Arnold and another in Lady Kitty; but the idiosyncrasies of Arnold, as has already been pointed out, supply pure amusement and so does the complacent ignorance of Lady Kitty. Here is a specimen of her usual conversation which reveals mplaherent mind:

Lady Kitty. I think it’s a beautiful chair.

Porteous. What do you call it, Hepplewhite ?

Arnold. No, Sheraton.

Lady Kitty. Oh I know. “ The School for Scandal.”

But she is purely an object of fun and not repulsion. Miss Jones¹ is another typical case with her idea of virtue, modesty, chastity and sense of propriety : she is a funny figure. But the reader is never made to sneer at Miss Jones, as he was

¹ *The Vessel of Wrath, Altogether.*

made to in the case of Miss Glover in *Mrs. Craddock*. Miss Glover has a heart of gold, yet her prudishness prevents us from fully sympathising with her; we suspect that the author finds her prudishness rather disgusting. But Miss Jones has been pictured by a different Maugham, from a mature, tolerant point of view, and whenever she bristles up with her sense of virtue, the reader is made to smile good-naturedly. The same is the case with "the celebrated Mortimer Ellis," the bigamist in *Round Dozen*¹. Mortimer Ellis never disgusts the reader nor makes him indignant, even when he succeeds in achieving his ambition of marrying for the twelfth time. He is only an amusing figure, and has been portrayed just to supply fun for "a hundred days" to the reading public as the author admits in the preface to *First Person Singular*. The narrator finds that he does not entirely dislike Mr. Kelada, the Mr. Know-all as he is nicknamed, though he has a discursive habit and has been represented to have disgusted all the people on board the ship.² In his recent novel *Theatre* he has indulged in another caricature in Michael who is very vain of his beauty. Even when he has a sagging belly and a double chin, he draws in his belly and throws out his chin whenever he is complimented on his beauty. But he supplies pure fun and this is entirely different from the caricature in Mrs. Kemp. There is no touch of malice or resentment here. "When nature produces a buffoon," the author remarks once, "he is a fair game and he has no just cause for complaint if the novelist to the best of his ability presents him as he is for the entertainment of his generation."³ There is no ulterior motive now other than entertainment.

Side by side with the decrease of Maugham's satirising tendency and the increase of genial tolerant humour we find him adopting another method of amusing his readers and

¹ *First Person Singular*.

² *Mr. Know-all, Cosmopolitans*.

³ Preface, *First Person Singular*.

audiences; he begins to create more and more characters who radiate mirth and joy. In the first few novels and plays we do not get such characters. The first appearance of such characters is in *The Explorer*. There we meet a pair of jolly people in Dick Lomas and Mrs. Crowley, who are joined together in bonds of matrimony quite befittingly. Such characters appear more and more as Maugham becomes tolerant and the bitterness leaves his mind. Strickland is the beginning of a series of characters whose very roguishness provides a source of humour. The narrator frankly tells Strickland that he is a cad. "Now that you've that off your chest, let's go and have dinner," replies Strickland.¹ One cannot but be amused by such a character. He is not exactly jolly as the others that follow are, but in him we get the seed of a Nichols. Walker,² Waddington,³ Gruyter,⁴ are attempts at drawing such characters the best example of which we find in Dr. Saunders and more so in Captain Nichols of *The Narrow Corner*. There are other characters portrayed, whose jollity is not due to their roguishness but due to bubbling life in them; such characters are Elizabeth of *The Circle*, Rosie Driffield of *Cakes and Ale* and Julia of *Theatre*.

We have discussed how the peculiar quality of his humour makes it more effective on stage than when read. But that does not mean that he is never humorous in his novels and short stories. We have already discussed some humorous scenes and bits of conversation which are quite amusing even when they are read, though of course they are more effective on the stage. As he grows mature Maugham succeeds in becoming very amusing to his readers, whenever he wants to do that. One of the methods he becomes master of, is that of amusing situations. When Maugham describes

¹ *The Moon and Sixpence*.

² *Mackintosh, The Trembling of a Leaf*.

³ *The Painted Veil*.

⁴ *The Vessel of Wrath*.

the story of a luncheon which he took with a lady, who professed never to take "more than one thing for luncheon" and ate up food to the value of nearly eighty gold francs, it cannot but make one chuckle.¹ There are a number of such humorous stories depending on situations: stories like *The Closed Shop*,² *The Wash Tub*,³ *The Creative Impulse*,⁴ etc., give ample proof of the author's power of inventing humorous situation.

In his latest novels, *Cakes and Ale*, *The Narrow Corner* and *Theatre*, we find him a full-fledged humorist. These are full of the humorous sallies of which he has become a master. Here is a bit of conversation between Captain Nichols and Dr. Saunders :

Dr. Saunders. "Socrates suffered the same sort of affliction (domestic unhappiness) but I never heard that it affected his digestion."

"Who was 'e?"

"An honest man."

"Much good it did him, I lay."

"In point of fact it did not."

"You've got to take things as you find them, I say, and if you're too particular you won't get anywhere."

What makes *The Narrow Corner* so full of humour, is the presence of this priceless pair in it. Dr. Saunders looks at everything from an Olympian height with a tolerant eye and finds fun in life itself. Nichols with his eternal complaint about his dyspepsia and his roguishness is a constant source of humour. Roguery is a thing which never fails to amuse any generation; we have only to look at the gallery of such pleasant rogues as Falstaff, Jack Wilton,⁵ Brainworm, Scapin,⁶ Gil Blas,⁷ to get the proof of it.

¹ *The Luncheon, Cosmopolitans.*

² *Cosmopolitans.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Altogether.*

⁵ Thomas Nashe, *Jack Wilton* or *The Unfortunate Traveller.*

⁶ Moliere, *Cheats of Scapin.*

⁷ Le Sage, Alain René, *Gil Blas de Santillane.*

Dr. Saunders finds his whole life a bit of fun, but in *The Narrow Corner* Maugham does not succeed in imparting that sense. He does that in his latest novel *Theatre*. He presents everything in a comic manner. Love's painful aspects, which helped to create the gloomy atmosphere of *Of Human Bondage*, turn into a comic affair. Maugham is able now to look at life as a disinterested spectator and from his height can see things in a way which is not possible to the actors in the drama of life. Maugham has succeeded in following the advice of Bergson :

Now step aside and look upon life as a disinterested spectator ; many a drama will turn into comedy.....¹

A reader of *Theatre* remains in no doubt about the truth of the self-revealing statement of Maugham that he is a " humorist by profession." ²

¹ *Laughter.*

² *The Traitor, Ashenden.*

CHAPTER VII

IN QUEST OF PEACE

I

The Pessimist

“What is life?” asked Count Leo Tolstoy¹;

“What, without asking, hither hurried whence?”

And, without asking, whither hurried hence?,” asked the eastern philosopher Omar Khayyam, and as Dr. Saunders in *The Narrow Corner* points out, “ever since men picked up a glimmer of intelligence in the primeval forests, they’ve been asking those questions.” Thinkers of all ages and of all countries have tried to fathom the mystery of life and find some answer to these troubling problems. Some like A. L. Barbauld have never tried to go much deeper than what they see :

Life ! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part.

But greater intellects are not satisfied with such simplicity and have tried to understand the meaning of ‘Life.’ And their feeling about life has sometimes (indeed, more often than not) been pessimistic :

a tale
Told by an idiot full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing.

—and sometimes been optimistic. In the nineteenth century the feeling about life tended to be optimistic. Browning felt :

God’s in his Heaven—
All’s right with the World.²

¹ *A Confession and What I Believe*,

² Browning, *Pippa Passes*,

Such was also the attitude of Tennyson,¹ and Tennyson only echoed the general attitude of the age. But even amid such contentment we find the note of rebellion in writers like Thomas Hardy; Angel Clare² parodies Browning's lines:

God is not in his Heaven—
And all's wrong with the World.

Hardy's novels, and most of his poems too, are steeped in this spirit all through and from this standpoint, if not from any other, he can be said to have heralded the twentieth century. It was becoming increasingly apparent from the last decade of the nineteenth century that the whole structure of Victorian beliefs was crumbling down. Intellectuals were beginning to ask questions. They were not satisfied with taking things at their face value and with the explanation of everything by accepting a benevolent and loving God as an axiomatic truth. The biology of Darwin had already given God's well-established seat in Heaven a shake from which it hardly ever recovered.

This was not the only thing the intellectuals began to question; they also began to look askance at the existing state of society. This has always been done by the outstanding intellects of every age; but now this dissatisfaction, which began with the intellectuals, spread quickly among the common masses as a result of the disastrous Boer War. These shattered the commoners' faith in the aristocracy and their rulers whose rights they had so long recognised unquestioned. One thing leads to another; the ball once set in motion went on rolling and thus the age of contentment gave place to the "Age of Interrogation." It was amid such general dissatisfaction, spiritual and material, that Somerset Maugham took up the profession of writing as a serious vocation.

¹ "And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear." (*In Memoriam*.)

² *Tess D'Urbervilles*.

As was only natural, Maugham, too, began to rend the veil of sham concealing the real state of things from the contented Victorian eyes. But he took a different road from Bernard Shaw. While Shaw is an active social reformer, cudgelling society with a view to bringing about a better order of things, Maugham has a more detached manner contemplating men and things with something like philosophic irony.

Maugham informs us in his autobiography that he learnt at least one thing from the elementary science taught in the medical school. He gathered the idea that everything conforms to the laws of nature and man is no exception. "I believed that we were wretched puppets at the mercy of a ruthless fate; and that, bound by the inexorable laws of nature, we were doomed to take part in the ceaseless struggle for existence with nothing to look forward to but inevitable defeat." He had a vague idea of this nature before, but it was this knowledge of science that made it more distinct. "I was violently pessimistic," he admits now, but from his first novel *Liza of Lambeth*, written when he was still a medical student, we do not get exactly that impression. We do not get the poignant note that we find later in *Of Human Bondage*. We cannot but suspect that though he has intellectually taken up this attitude of pessimism, he does not yet whole-heartedly feel it. We do not get here the impress of a despairing soul, the utmost we can get is the humane sympathy of the author for the miseries and sufferings of the people, which he had witnessed in course of his medical duties in Lambeth.

We see pessimism, that was a mere seed in his first novel, develop to its fullest growth in *Of Human Bondage*. Between this book and *Liza of Lambeth* he wrote about a dozen plays and novels but in none of them we get the true impress of the author; he was trying to be popular and he was developing his medium; he was a little mechanical, his soul had very little opportunity of coming out in an inspired moment. *Of Human Bondage* is the first book he wrote under inspiration,

feeling an uncontrollable urge from within. This book is the record of the disturbance which Maugham was feeling in his soul.

"What is the meaning of all these sufferings?", he had been asking himself for many years. In search for an answer Maugham began to study the philosophers, classical and modern, of the East and of the West; but they only made him a more confirmed pessimist. He went to them for an answer which would make him happy. But he could not believe in *Karma* which could have given him what he wanted. He wanted something positive to take away from him the thoughts that troubled him; he has given a clear idea of the restless state of his mind in *Of Human Bondage*. Philip, there, is the projection of Maugham himself. Philip thinks:

What is the use of it?

The effort was so incommensurate with the result. The bright hopes of youth had to be paid for at such a bitter price of disillusionment. Pain and disease and unhappiness weighed down the scale so heavily. What did it all mean? He thought of his own life, the high hopes with which he had entered upon it, the limitations which his body forced upon him, his friendlessness, and the lack of affection which had surrounded his youth. He did not know that he had ever done anything but what seemed best to do, and what a cropper he had come! Other men, with no more advantages than he, succeeded, and others again, with many more, failed. It seemed pure chance. The rain falls alike upon the just and upon the unjust and for nothing was there a why and a wherefore.

Cronshaw, the poet, had presented Philip with a piece of Persian carpet as an answer to Philip's questions about the meaning of life; "you shall have to find the answer yourself," he had added with that present. And Philip finds that answer one day on the streets of London, after being disappointed as a painter, bruised in love, tossed roughly in a blanket by whimsical fortune and compelled to become a shop-walker to escape starving. Suddenly the answer occurred to him:

The answer was obvious. Life had no meaning. On the earth, satellite of a star speeding through space, living things had arisen under the

influence of conditions which were part of the planet's history ; and as there had been a beginning of life upon it, so, under influence of other conditions, there would be an end ; man, no more significant than other forms of life, had come not as the climax of creation but as a physical reaction to the environment.....There was no meaning in life, and man by living served no end. It was immaterial whether he was born or not born, whether he lived or ceased to live. Life was insignificant and death without consequence."

Maugham has become at this stage convinced of the insignificance of human beings. They cannot influence their actions. They are bound hand and foot. "The illusion of free will is so strong in my mind," says Philip, "that I can't get away from it, but I believe it is only an illusion..... Before I do anything I feel that I have a choice, and that influences what I do ; but afterwards, when the thing is done, I believe that it was inevitable from all eternity." Maugham would not have felt so strongly about it if he could believe in the philosophy of *Karma* or in God, whom he had long ago taken to be "a hypothesis that a reasonable man must reject." ¹ But he could not, and as a result, we find him believing in "the meaninglessness of pain which is pessimism's unanswered argument." Philip finds that life weaves a pattern but it has no meaning just as the pattern on the Persian carpet. Philip remembers the story of the Eastern king, who ordered a sage to prepare a history of man and the sage at the death-bed of the king brought the essence of the history of man ; it was this :

He was born, he suffered and he died.

We find that in *Of Human Bondage* Maugham shows a conviction in the stark realities of the world, otherwise he could not be such a pessimist. If one can convince himself with the Eastern philosopher that—

.....in and out, above and below
It is nothing but a Magic Shadow show
Played in a Box whose candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go—²

¹ *The Summing Up*.

² Fitzgerald, *Omar Khayyam*.

the whole basis of pessimism would have gone ; man could have laughed at suffering as it is a mere " Shadow show " ; it would have seemed to him foolishness to cry over a piece of unreality. To some extent Maugham's life resembles Philip's, a record of disillusionment and suffering. At the time of writing the book, he informs us in his autobiography, he was feeling very tired and disgusted with the world. And he conceived an idea how to find peace and happiness. " I conceived these notions, " he says, " when I was still at work on *Of Human Bondage* and turning my wishes into fiction, as writers will, towards the end of it I drew a picture of the marriage I should have liked to make. " ¹ He thought he could find happiness in a marriage with a girl like Sally, steady, hard-working and tender, always looking to his comforts in her quiet way. This is, however, also a passing fancy in Maugham's mind.

II

The Shadow of a Utopia

" Life weaves a meaningless pattern, " is the conclusion that Maugham arrived at in *Of Human Bondage* ; but we have seen that at the end of that book he came to the conclusion that it is not a bad idea to make that pattern beautiful. How to make it so, is the question that troubles him now. When writing *Of Human Bondage* he had one fancy and now he has another, a more clearly conceived one.

The hardships of the life of an Intelligence Officer in the War told on his health, and as he did not have any more work to do for the time being, he took the opportunity of withdrawing himself for some time. He began travelling. And after a few months in America he went to the South Seas.

¹ *The Summing Up*.

From his youth, when he read *The Ebb-tide* and *The Wrecker*, he had always wanted to go there. His ill health perhaps made him more susceptible to beauty and when he saw the islands, their hectic beauty ravished him. He was fascinated ; and he was not the only writer who was caught by their lure and found his ideal there. They had inflamed the imagination of Pierre Loti, Stevenson and Joseph Conrad. Keable finds his heaven here :

Here is peace. Here is beauty as a golden ladder up to the far and unknown heaven of our hope ; here is simple quiet living, boundless wealth a sure reward. . . . But I go. I must have people and self-complacent civilization and London, I suppose. ¹

The same note of yearning for that land is found in Rupert Brooke :

.....I was going far away from gentleness and beauty and kindness and the smell of the lagoons and the thrills of that dancing and the scarlet of the flamboyants and the white and gold and other flowers.²

He found it too painful to drag himself away from that heaven on earth and it was the same case with Maugham. He had already been disgusted with civilization and was sure that the peace which he wanted could not be found there and now like Keable and Rupert Brooke he had the golden vision. And when he went back he felt as much sorrow as Rupert Brooke or Keable. That note of yearning we find in *The Moon and Sixpence* :

Tahiti is very far away, and I know that I should never see it again. A chapter of my life was closed, and I felt a little nearer to inevitable death. *The Moon and Sixpence* was written more than three years after his visit to Tahiti. In the mean time the War had ended leaving a distasteful memory in Maugham's mind ; and more important still, he had to remain an invalid as a result of tuberculosis for the last two years. It is a well-known fact

¹ *Isle of Dreams*.

² *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*, with a Memoir, (2nd edition, 1928, published by Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd.) p. cxvii.

that invalids, specially those suffering from tuberculosis, develop a very romantic temperament—we owe to this disease the romantic and adventurous books of Stevenson. Perhaps the same thing happened in the case of Maugham. As an invalid he had enough time to ponder over the War, and the contrast that the peaceful scenery of Tahiti offered to it, began to loom very large, and as a result of that we have the exquisite stories, *The Fall of Edward Bernard* and *Rain*, and the novel *The Moon and Sixpence* (all written in 1919).

In *The Moon and Sixpence* Maugham's love of that simple life in Tahiti comes out in spite of the fact that his subject matter compelled him to put a rein on that inclination. His main theme was the character of an inhuman artist and he could not let his attention wander much. But here and there his notion of a happy life is revealed in little pictures. With deep-seated feeling he gives a picture of the life Strickland's son by Ata is living, in contrast to that of his civilized son :

I saw him with my mind's eye, on the schooner on which he worked, wearing nothing but a pair of dungarees ; and at night, when the boat sailed along easily before a light breeze, and the sailors were gathered on the upper deck, I saw him dance with another lad, dance wildly, to the wheezy music of the concertina. Above was the blue sky, and the stars, and all about the desert of the Pacific Ocean.

In *Rain* he has given a picture of the artificial and arbitrary notions of civilized society gradually killing the happiness of the natives of the islands, who were quite happy in the simple, peaceful life they were leading. The militant Christian missionary Davidson wants to make the natives 'civilized' and 'virtuous' according to his idea of virtue. He, and with him, his wife, shudder to think of the natural attire of the natives. Davidson takes severe steps to make the natives wear civilized clothes and to abolish their informal marriages. Maugham imparts the idea that these notions of civilization choke the natural flow of happiness in the natives. But here too, as in *The Moon and Sixpence*, Maugham has

dwelt on that by the way. His object mainly was to depict the bigoted and intolerant missionary Davidson.

In *The Fall of Edward Bernard*, this disgust for the mechanical civilization and fascination for the simple life find their fullest expression. Edward Bernard echoes Maugham's belief in the worthlessness of civilization in no uncertain terms :

What is the use of all this hustle and this constant striving? I think of Chicago now and I see a dark, grey city all stone—it is like a prison—and a ceaseless turmoil. And what does all that activity amount to? When I am old, what have I to look forward to? To hurry from my home in the morning to my office and work hour after hour till night, and then hurry home again, and dine and go to a theatre? I want to make more of my life than that.

And “to make more of his life” Edward Bernard has fled from “the sick fatigue, the languid doubt” of civilization just like the scholar gypsy of Matthew Arnold, and just like him,

Came as most men deem'd to little good.

Success, in the imagination of ordinary men, is the success, of which Bateman has a vision,

Of the works of the Hunter Motor Traction and Automobile Company growing in size and importance till they covered a hundred acres, and of the millions of motors they would turn out.

Maugham knows that it is not there that happiness lies. He thought, at that time, that it lies in the kind of life Edward Bernard dreams of living :

I shall build myself a house on my coral island and I shall live there looking after my trees—I shall grow all sorts of things in my garden, and I shall fish. There will be enough work to keep me busy and not enough to make me dull. I shall have my books and Eva, children I hope, and above all the infinite variety of the sea and the sky, the freshness of the dawn and the beauty of the sunset, and the rich magnificence of the night. When I am an old man I hope that I shall be able to look back on a happy, simple, peaceful life.

We find here in a nutshell Maugham's idea of how to make a beautiful pattern of life.

Maugham in fact has been saying here almost the same thing that Ernest Dawson has preached in his poems, "why run after shadows when the prize is here?" Maugham has arrived at an idea which is more of the East than of the West. The Hindu sages have always followed the pattern of life that Maugham here pictures. The same idea occurs in Tagore. He also finds a perfect ideal life in simplicity and quiet :

নাইক পথে ঠেলাঠেলি,
নাইক হাটে গোল,
ওরে কবি, এইখানে তোঁর
কুটিরখানি তোল্ !
ফেল্‌রে ধুয়ে পায়ের ধুলো,
নামিয়ে দেৱে বোঝা,
বেঁধেনে তোঁর সেতারখানা
বেঁধে দে তোঁর খোঁজা ।
পা ছড়িয়ে বঁস্‌রে হেঁথায়
সারাদিনের শেবে,
তারায়-ভরা আকাশতলে
সব-পেয়েছির দেশে ।

— সব পেয়েছির দেশ খেয়া

[A free translation of it will be something like this :

There is no tumult in the street,
No noise in the mart ;
O poet, in this place
Raise your humble hut.
Wash the dirt of your feet
Put down your load,
And tune your *Sitar* ;
Leave further quest on the road.
Sit here at ease
When the day hears the call
Beneath the starry sky,
In the land where ' I have found all. ']

Tagore, with his Eastern mind, has no need of "further quest on the road"; but Maugham, with his typical restless Western mind, cannot remain satisfied with that ideal life for long. He has, of course, till recently, almost always taken the South Sea islands as his background; but he has never abandoned himself to the charms of the islands anywhere else. In 1921, in his play *The Circle*, Teddie pictures his home in the Federated Malay States which inflames Elizabeth's imagination and becomes a decisive factor in her problem whether to elope with Teddie or not. In *Mackintosh*, *Red*, *The Pool* and a few other stories he has touched on the attraction of that country. But we feel that the impression of the dazzling beauty of Tahiti is growing fainter and fainter, and from about 1925, the date of the publication of *The Painted Veil*, we see him entirely preoccupied with characters; he only gives a few business-like touches to create a background but it is so faint that we cannot recognise the land painted in *The Fall of Edward Bernard*. He has become completely free from the fancy that overpowered him when his intellect was softened by romantic imagination.

It is not difficult to guess how this happened. As the impression on his mind became fainter as a result of the flight of time, and also when with the recovery of his health his mind became as vigorous as ever, Maugham gradually returned to his own pessimistic self. With the same disillusioned eyes, with which he rent the painted veil of life in civilized society, Maugham began to look into this dream-land of his. For a short time he had deceived himself by imagining that an ideal atmosphere produces ideal happiness, gives peace to the mind, which he was seeking. When he rends even that veil, he finds that sufferings and miseries reside there as well as in civilized states. He pictures how the fatal attraction of the beauty of the place becomes indirectly responsible for the tragedy of Lawson. "I was all over the place when I first

came out," Lawson says.¹ But after a few years of life there he wants to go back. He cannot do that because his wife, a native of the place and brought up amid the intoxicating beauty of the island, cannot live away from it. And Lawson deteriorates slowly but surely and at last commits suicide. *The Force of Circumstance*, *Before the Party*, *The Outstation* and many other stories deal with tragedies occurring amid the beautiful and peaceful surroundings of the South Sea Islands or the adjacent countries. One particular thing to be noticed is the fact that Maugham has produced many characters, at this stage, who are fed up with the beauty of the country just as he produced once a character like Edward Bernard who is completely wrapped up in the charm of the place. Lawson in *The Pool* wants to leave the place. Neilson in *Red* does the same. Gallagher in *P. & O.* "does not want to see the country or anyone in it" again. Maugham has discovered that beauty too, like love, has its "sad satiety."

Maugham, at this stage, has understood that peace of mind is the greatest thing, that on it depends happiness, and that peace of mind is independent of the surroundings though they may help it. And from now on we find him turning his eyes away from physical beauty and turning them inward. We find him looking for the beauty of the soul.

III

The Beauty of the Soul

The attitude of a man towards life changes as his mind matures. But the phases of its change are not so individualised, so distinct from one another, as to fall into natural water-tight compartments. The phases overlap one another. There are always concurrent ideas in a mind, some getting stronger, some getting weaker and at last vanishing altogether in the

¹ *The Pool*, *The Trembling of a Leaf*.

process of development. In the first stage, in spite of his unsettled mind, Maugham had a strong and clear-cut conviction. But the difficulty begins from the time when he is seeking the means of escape from such a tormenting conviction. Many are the ways open before him; and he tries them, not one at a time, but sometimes looks indecisively at two or three. The division into periods can only be made by taking the idea that is uppermost in his mind at the time under consideration.

Even so long ago as the time when Maugham was obsessed with Tahiti, we find him having a peep into the beauty of a soul. Dirk Stroeve¹ is the picture of a beautiful soul. But he is a buffoon; he has not the serene beauty of the souls Maugham painted later.

In *The Moon and Sixpence* the beautiful soul of Dirk Stroeve occupies only a fraction of the author's mind. His main attention was fixed on something else. But in *The Painted Veil* (1925) we see a distinct change. In it Maugham is entirely occupied with the soul. He pictures the mysterious and strangely beautiful soul of Walter, and more than that he is concerned with the development, the purification and the sublimation of the soul of Kitty.

. Maugham, of course, has always held that no man is entirely bad, but he had, before this stage, always kept the balance pretty steady. But from now on he is more and more bringing out the angel in human beings. Ginger Ted, in *The Vessel of Wrath*, is converted into an angel at the end of the story. *The Back of Beyond* has a character in Tom Saffary, who is a more normal Dirk Stroeve, unsuspecting, tender and forgiving. In *Salvatore* we find a character who possesses "the rarest, most precious, and the loveliest of all qualities," namely, goodness.² Neil Macadam³ is another such pure

¹ *The Moon and Sixpence*.

² *Salvatore, Cosmopolitians*.

³ *Neil Macadam, Ah King*.

soul. In Erik Christessen¹ we get a ripe fruit of this stage in Maugham's mind. This tendency culminates in *Sheppey*. In that play, the angel is the hero too. In the short stories already mentioned, the beauty of the soul has been given very little space to develop, though they are heroes. But in *Sheppey* we find a character whose angelic soul fills the whole space. Whether this is due to the "collective unconscious" completely getting the upper hand in Maugham (as R. H. Ward² suggests), is a vain speculation. We find that Maugham's search for peace leads him to the inner beauty of the soul and *Sheppey* is its culminating point.

Maugham has found out that the purity and goodness of the soul produce happiness. Erik Christessen is happy in his 'Kingdom of Heaven,' which the purity of his soul helps to create in his own mind. Kitty of the last stage, when she is converted into a good and pure soul, finds no dissatisfaction with life. She says to her father :

.....I have hope and courage. The past is finished ; let the dead bury their dead. It's all uncertain, life and whatever is to come to me, but I enter upon it with a light and buoyant heart.³

Even Dirk Stroeve is very happy not only before the tragedy occurs but also after it ; Maugham suggests that he will be happy, living among simple folk and leading a humble life ; his purity of soul will give him peace. *Sheppey*, like Christessen, has created a 'Kingdom of Heaven' in his mind. The angelic characters of the short stories are all happy.

¹ *The Narrow Corner* (1932).

² ".....here we have the collective unconscious, the spiritual plane from which inspiration arises, manifesting itself much more directly than anywhere else in his writings. The story of *Sheppey*.....is overtly a story of the spirit. It has not had its spiritual quality obscured by translation through thought symbols and word symbols, it has not become something else, a material reflection of the spiritual, but has remained spiritual throughout its translation from collective unconscious to papers. It has passed through the agents of its expression with remarkable purity." R. H. Ward, *W. Somerset Maugham*.

(It is to be noted that Mr. Ward has used the phrase "collective unconscious," not in the technical sense in which Dr. Jung has used it, but in a simplified sense.)

³ *The Painted Veil*.

Ginger Ted¹ had never been happy when he was leading a devil's life ; but he feels a new exultation when he turns a new leaf. In fact Maugham has understood the true sense of the proverb " Virtue is its own reward. " One who has a pure soul and does good to others, has the reward in the happiness that automatically comes to the good. One need not look to a life hereafter for the reward. " You do good because it gives you pleasure. It is the purest form of happiness there is." ² The angels created before the production of *The Narrow Corner* have all been awarded material happiness ; Dirk Stroeve, Ginger Ted, Tom Saffary, Neil Macadam and others are all happy in their own way, at the end of the story. But it is different with Erik Christessen and Sheppey. Erik commits suicide and Sheppey turns mad and it may lead one to think that Maugham has gone back to the stage of *Of Human Bondage*. But the very fact that these books are not steeped in a very tragic atmosphere, is enough to dispel such a view.

An isolated study of *The Narrow Corner* and *Sheppey* at once makes the reader question himself why, in spite of the sad ends, the atmosphere is not sufficiently gloomy and tragic. For a powerful writer like Maugham, to fail to leave an impress on the reader of the tragic note, to make him feel keenly for the sufferings of such good people, is a little strange. One explanation of course is that Maugham does not produce such a tragic note because he is convinced that those pure souls, fortified with their purity and goodness, do not feel the misery as ordinary people ; and the author does not like to show a thing in a more tragic light than it really is. But perhaps the better explanation lies in the fact that, at this stage, he has found another avenue of escape from pessimism. He has conveniently taken the help of the philosophy of *Maya* and that helps him to look at the miseries and sufferings of mankind with perfect equanimity.

¹ *Vessel of Wrath, Ah King.*

² *The Back of Beyond, Ah King.*

IV

Peace At Last

In his autobiography Maugham remarks that he has gathered one fact from his study of the philosophers, *viz.*, that the philosophers first become convinced of one thing, irrespective of the reasons, and then find out reasons to support the convictions that suit their particular 'humours.' Maugham has hit upon a truth that fits himself like a glove. At the time of writing *Of Human Bondage* he was in a humour to believe in materialism and "the physiological determinism that went with it,"¹ but when his restless mind was despairing of finding any lasting avenue of peace—he had already been disillusioned about Tahiti and all that it represents—he came to be in a 'humour' to be influenced by the Hindu philosophy of *Maya*.

It is very difficult to say exactly from when he has been under the influence of this philosophy. Even so far back as in *The Magician* (1908) we have a trace of such an idea. He makes Haddo say :

What else is the world than a figure? Life itself is but a symbol. You must be a wise man if you can tell us what is reality.

But apparently Maugham did not mean it seriously. It is still nothing but a charlatan's nonsense. It takes a long time for such a philosophy to get a hold on the materialistic-minded Englishman. In fact we do not see it in a well-formed state till 1932, the year of the publication of *The Narrow Corner*. Here we first see this philosophy mixed up with his attraction for good souls. We have already seen that it helps him to look with equanimity at the tragic end of such good people like Erik Christessen and Sheppey.

Maugham expresses this philosophy through the mouth of Dr. Saunders. He is another projection of Maugham himself and acts to some extent as his mouthpiece as Philip did at one time. Dr. Saunders tries to console Fred, when he is mad with grief, with the idea that the world is an illusion, echoing the theory of *Maya* in Indian Philosophy :

The world consists of me and my thoughts and my feelings..... Life is a dream in which I create the objects that come before me. Everything knowable, every object of experience, is an idea in my mind, and without my mind it does not exist. Then there is no possibility and no necessity to postulate anything outside myself. Dream and reality are one. Life is a connected and consistent dream, and when I cease to dream, the world with its beauty, its pain and sorrow, its unimaginable variety, will cease to be.

It is the essence of the Hindu philosophy of *Maya*, "the illusion of the phenomenal world," which Frith¹ finds "to be the only religion that a reasonable man can accept without misgiving." That opinion of Frith is the opinion of Somerset Maugham at this stage. He is in a humour to believe that the world is a dream and he accepts the reasonings offered by the philosophers who held such a view.

When we examine *Theatre*, which was written later at the back of the mocking vein, in which it is written, we find the influence of such a philosophy. From his philosophic height Maugham looks at his characters with the contentment arising out of the thought that the creatures of the real world, on whom he has modelled his creations, are all dream figures. Therefore, he can see things in their comic aspects; a few touches are given here and there and the incidents which in 1915 would have looked to him pathetic and painful—the miseries arising out of the affairs of the heart—become extremely comic. We cannot doubt that, if Julia² had been created at the same time as *Of Human Bondage*, she would have been

made a tragic figure with her passion for Tom, and her mortification at her lover's coldness and unfaithfulness would have been as feelingly painted as that of Philip. But the time has changed and now Maugham, fortified with his new philosophy, is not touched in the same way by human suffering as before ; what is touched in him now by it, is his sense of humour. Apparently Maugham has got at last what he wanted—peace and contentment.

V

The Yearning for the Faith Lost

One expects, from a man who is convinced that the world is a dream of one's own creation, a certain ironical smile at the faith of those who believe in God and the Hereafter. We could have expected Maugham to make the nuns in the convent,¹ who believe in God and a reward after death, ridiculous. He mocks their ceremonies—we can feel that—but that is all. Why is it so ? A bit of conversation between Kitty and Waddington gives the answer. Kitty says :

Supposing there is no life everlasting ? Think what it means if death is really the end of all things. They have given up all for nothing. They have been cheated. They're dupes.

Waddington, after some reflection, answers :

I wonder. I wonder if it matters that what they have aimed at is illusion. Their lives are in themselves beautiful. I have an idea that the only thing which makes it possible to regard this world we live in without disgust, is the beauty which now and then men create out of the chaos. The pictures they paint, the music they compose, the books they write, and the lives they lead. Of all these the richest in beauty is the beautiful life that is the perfect work of art.

¹ *The Painted Veil.*

Maugham has found that these nuns, guided by undisturbed faith, have succeeded in making a beautiful pattern in life for which he has been seeking. These nuns, he has found, have one advantage over him ; their faith makes it easier for them to get that happiness, whereas it is difficult (and we shall see later that it has been impossible) for Maugham to attain that through the intellect. It may be objected that, at the time of writing this book, Maugham had not come under the influence of the *Maya* philosophy and that is why he looks with admiration and with a yearning in his heart for that faith which can give peace and happiness ; or in other words, that this yearning is a temporary one and must have vanished with his growing conviction that the world is a dream. If it be so, then why does he picture Ginger Ted ¹ feeling happy when he has that faith ? Ginger is happy to find that “ there is something in it (Christianity) after all ”—and *The Vessel of Wrath* was written in 1930. Even if that is too early for him to have come under the influence of the *Maya* philosophy, what about *Sheppey* (1933) ? At least *Sheppey* was produced after his conviction of the world’s unreality. That drama, we feel, was written with the same yearning in his heart of hearts for the faith, which we saw first in *The Painted Veil* ; Sheppey feels exultation when he comes to feel in his heart like a true Christian with an immense faith.

This yearning for faith does not mean that he yearns for the faith in Christianity—the illustrations given above may lead to such a mistaken idea. It is not that. Maugham yearns for any faith that gives one happiness. He yearns for the faith which the Jap diver in *The Narrow Corner* feels :

For the Jap, lying there, dying there painlessly, it was not the end but the turning over a page ; he knew that he was slipping from one life to another. *Karma*, the deeds of this as of other lives he had passed, would be somehow continued ; and perhaps, in his exhaustion, the only motion that remained to him was curiosity ; anxious he might be or amused, to know in what condition he would be reborn.

¹ *The Vessel of Wrath*.

The Jap believing in *Karma* dies with equanimity. He knows that "somehow his life will be continued"; it would have saved Maugham much unhappiness if only he could have such a faith. Maugham knows that. When we probe deeper into the cause of such yearning, we cannot but come to a rather unhappy conclusion.

VI

The Final Stage

The last section naturally leads us to the question, "Why does Maugham yearn after faith, even though he has attained the peace of mind through his philosophy?" It arouses one suspicion in our minds, that this philosophic calm is also a passing phase like the other phases we have examined—at least it makes us doubt the firmness of Maugham's faith in his philosophy.

Maugham belongs to the race of men which produced a Dr. Johnson who asked people to hit their heads on the wall to convince themselves of the reality of this world, and it is difficult for a man belonging to such a race of practical men to believe in a philosophy like that of *Maya*. The advocates of that philosophy, moreover, had at least faith in one thing—in one Absolute, in relation to which all other things are unreal. But Maugham having no faith in the essential basis of that philosophy, namely, the Absolute, has his ground cut away from beneath him.¹ He tried to make a practical use of that philosophy, and naturally this self-hypnotism could not be carried very far. He cannot, with his whole soul, take such a philosophy as the truth. "If life is too painful one must have the courage to leave the world," he says at one place²; such an advice cannot come from a man who

¹ One suspects that the smattering of that philosophy was acquired from a study of *Outlines of Hindu Philosophy* by Srinivasa Iyengar, mentioned in *The Narrow Corner*.

² *The Summing Up*.

takes pain as only part of a fiction created by one's own mind in conjunction with the senses, without which that suffering does not exist.

Every school of philosophy takes something as given, as fundamental axiomatic truth; but the difficulty with Maugham is that he cannot swallow that "given" quantity. Nothing, therefore, satisfies him. He set to build up a consistent and reasonable philosophy of his own. "I knew very well," he says, "that I had no gift for metaphysical speculation. I meant to take from here and there theories that satisfied not only my mind, but what I could not but think more important than my mind, the whole body of my instincts, feelings and deep-rooted prejudices, the prejudices that are so intimate a part of one that they can hardly be distinguished from instincts; and out of them make a system that would be valid for me and enable me to pursue the course of my life."¹ And the part of *Maya* philosophy which regards the world as a personal illusion came in very handy to build up the philosophy suited to his mind. But one fears that it has only become a mental pose with Maugham. It has not cured him completely of his inborn restlessness; he still has a yearning for the peace which other people get through faith; we could not have found that trace of envy and regret if he were himself happy and completely at peace with the world.

But the first impression that his latest novels impart to the reader is, however, that of peace and contentment. He seems apparently to have managed to escape from the tormenting thoughts that have so long pursued him. What he has done really is that he has averted his eyes from human sufferings. This *Maya* philosophy seems to have done one thing at least; he may not believe in that philosophy but there is no doubt that it has shaken his belief in the reality of the sufferings which he sees around him. And it will not

¹ *The Summing Up*.

be perhaps too far-fetched, if we suspect that the real condition of his mind is a state of happy blankness arising out of exhaustion. He does not like to think of that problem any more ; he likes to cling to the philosophy of illusion as long as he can :

“ You’ve lost heart, hope, faith and awe. What in God’s name have got left ? ” asks Fred Blake. “ Resignation,” answers Dr. Saunders.¹ Maugham has attained that resignation—perhaps out of despair—yet, for practical purposes, it serves as well as any other kind of resignation ; it has given him peace. But the question which naturally comes to our mind, when we find the signs of his intellectual restlessness, is “ How long is this resignation to last ? ”

VII

A Formula for Happiness

Somerset Maugham belongs to a race of practical men and we have seen that this fact is the cause of his weak faith in the philosophy of *Maya*. And yet we have seen that such a philosophy has given him some peace ; it has helped him to condition his mind to the sufferings of people, from the pain of which he has averted his eyes but the humour of which he can quite perceive. From the practical point of view he has escaped from the pessimism which has so long tormented him.

He has attained peace of mind but being a practical man he knows that ordinary people cannot attain that in the way he has done ; they cannot be happy by seeing good souls happy, neither can they swallow the idea that the world is a piece of unreality. To actors on this world’s stage, the world with its sufferings, disappointments and miseries is a hard piece of reality. For them, Maugham has shown some practical ways of mitigating their sufferings. He has not sermonised. He has only suggested some practical methods.

¹ *The Narrow Corner*.

It did not take him long to come to the conclusion that "nature is hostile." Man must suffer; that cannot be helped. But Maugham has found out that there is such a thing as self-inflicted suffering and this he tries to point out to his foolish fellow creatures. He, unlike Chekov, is not preoccupied with the hostile ways of a Superior Force but is more concerned with the ways of men.

"Is it not pitiful that men, tarrying so short a space in a world where there is so much pain, should thus torture themselves?"¹ He has found out that "with a certain humour and good deal of horse-sense one can make a fairly good job of what is after all a matter of small consequence."² Maugham finds that men who should be expected to take up this attitude of making the best of a bad bargain, fail to use that "horse-sense" and only find some means to torture themselves.

He set himself to find out those essentially artificial and worthless notions, the conventions and fixed ideas in which men have steeped themselves and without which they could have been much happier. One of such notions is religion. In *Rain* Maugham has pointed out how far such religious mania can go; Davidson, the missionary, by his religious zeal, and an entirely misdirected zeal at that, manages to rob the simple natives of their joy of living a care-free life.

There are other more contemptible attitudes for which Maugham cannot but feel some disgust. Men have formed some notions about gentlemanliness which are, as Maugham shows, absolutely ludicrous. Mr. Wurburton in *The Outstation* insists on dressing properly even when he dines alone. Mr. Gruyter in *The Vessel of Wrath* dines with more relish though he does not follow Mr. Wurburton's idea of gentle breeding. This kind of snobbishness, however, is quite harmless; but Maugham knows how far this can go. He shows

¹ Kitty, *The Painted Veil*.

² Dr. Saunders, *The Narrow Corner*.

that in *The Alien Corn* where the struggle between George's tendency to live in natural manner and his father's idea of behaving like an "English Gentlemen" leads to much unhappiness and ultimately to George's suicide.

With these worthless ideas, the fruits of a civilization going the wrong way, Maugham has no patience. He expresses the same thing as Oscar Wilde's Hester Worsley does in *A Woman of No Importance* :

You shut out of your society the gentle and the good. You laugh at the simple and the pure.....You have lost life's secret.

Maugham suggests that to be happy one needs to find out this 'life's secret.' And every thinking man cannot but agree with Maugham in this respect. But it is difficult to swallow Maugham's conclusion about love and the efficacy of fidelity.

He has found out from his own experience how much pain passion can bring to human beings. He passes over that lightly in *The Summing Up* where he speaks of "a young attractive person" for whom he had to scrape up as much money as he could lay hands on ; he had to stoop to writing pot-boilers even. He makes Philip¹ pass through a similar experience in his love for Mildred ; the poignancy of that is so successfully conveyed to the reader that it leaves one in no doubt of its personal character. He shows the disaster which passion brings in innumerable places. Blanche Stroeve commits suicide when Strickland leaves her.² Kitty and Walter in *The Painted Veil* are consumed with its fire, Chandralal in the short story *Giulia Lazzari*³ has to give up his comfortable refuge and commits suicide because he cannot check his love for Giulia Lazzari. Mrs. Crosbie in *The Letter*⁴ murders her lover when she finds him cold and unfaithful. In *Neil Macadam* Darya's passion for Neil results in her losing her

¹ *Of Human Bondage*.

² *The Moon and Sixpence*.

³ *Ashenden*.

⁴ *Altogether*.

life in the jungle. Maugham pictures how ugly passion can become, in *The Narrow Corner*, where Mrs. Hudson's passionate attachment to Fred Blake makes her plot with devilish cunning the murder of her husband by Fred. These are only a few of the most outstanding instances. Maugham has shown even in his first novel the doings of love, "the dirty trick nature has played upon man"¹; and we rarely get any novel or short story or play written by him in which we do not find some trace or other of the pain caused by love. Maugham, however, knows from personal experience that in this matter men and women cannot help themselves; he feels sympathy for the characters who are in love's throes. But he knows, from personal experience again, that this consuming passion does not last. "When you fall in love at twenty you think your love will last for ever, but at fifty you know so much, about life and about love, and you know that it will last so short a time," says Mr. Hamlyn.² Roger in *Theatre* finds that "love is not worth all the fuss they make about it." Maugham therefore gives the advice to take it easy. He advocates the policy of taking love as a pleasant thing, like an article of luxury to spice our life, and not too seriously. After all nothing really matters in this world of make-believe. Mrs. Nesbit in *Of Human Bondage* is the first product, though an immature one, of such a view. The mature products are Rosie Driffield in *Cakes and Ale* (1930) and Julia in *Theatre* (1937). To Rosie friends mean lovers. The narrator once feels the pain of jealousy on account of her other lovers.

"What harm does it to you? Don't I give you a good time! Aren't you happy when you are with me?" Rosie asks.

"Awfully," he answers.

"Well then. It's so silly to be fussy and jealous. Why not be happy with what you can get? Enjoy yourself while you have the chance,

¹ *The Summing Up*.

² *P. & O., Altogether*.

I say ; we shall be dead in a hundred years and what will anything matter then ? Let's have a good time while we can."

And Ashenden understands that there is no use inviting pain. Rosie may be mistaken for a street woman and Ashenden's defence of that ' sweet ' woman, as he calls her, is a bit hard to accept, but it is quite consistent with Maugham's opinion as to the way of making life comfortable. Ashenden, the narrator, says :

She was a simple woman. Her instincts were healthy and ingenuous. She loved to make people happy. She loved love.....She was naturally affectionate. When she liked anyone it was quite natural for her to go to bed with him. She never thought twice about it. It was not vice ; it was not lasciviousness ; it was her nature. She gave herself as naturally as the Sun gives heat or the flowers their perfume. It had no effect on her character ; she remained sincere, unspoiled and artless.¹

Maugham in fact condemns passion but wisely enough supports instinct, which can only make life pleasant and does not make it burdensome as passionate love does. Luise Frith in *The Narrow Corner* does not suffer very much when Fred leaves her because in her case it is instinct and not passionate love as Dr. Saunders shrewdly guesses. Julia in *Theatre* heaves a sigh of relief and laughs over the whole affair when she manages to escape from her passion for Tom. We may say that Maugham approves (unlike Aldous Huxley) the state of love in the world which Huxley paints satirically in *Brave New World*.

Maugham is not blind to the fact that in a case of love, sometimes not only is unhappiness caused to the lovers by their own passion, but more pain is added to their lot by other people, who also suffer because they have not tolerance. " A little tolerance, a little good humour and you do not know how comfortable you can make yourself on this planet." ² People indeed do not know how much comfort can tolerance

¹ *Cakes and Ale*.

² Dr. Saunders, *The Narrow Corner*.

bring. Dirk Stroeve in *The Moon and Sixpence* knows the value of tolerance; he wants to take his wife back if she consents. But Dirk Stroeve is much above ordinary men. Most people are of the opposite nature; normal men are like Mr. Crosbie of *The Letter*, most women are like Doris of *The Force of Circumstance*—they cannot take the past infidelity of their mates in a tolerant spirit. Maugham shows that if they could—and it would have been possible if they had not in their minds the fixed idea about some arbitrary rules of conduct, summed up in the word “virtue”—they would have had happiness. Mr. Crosbie certainly could not have found any further complaint to make against his wife if he only could take a lenient attitude towards her past attachment to Geoffrey Hammond. Doris would have found in Guy a perfectly faithful husband if she could only bring herself to sympathise with the fear of loneliness that had driven her husband to live with another woman, a native of the place. Indeed a little tolerance on the part of those who thought themselves the ‘injured’ parties, according to the notions of civilized society, would have saved them much suffering. As Maugham remarks in *The Alien Corn*, “It is strange that men, inhabitants for so short a while of an alien and inhuman world, should go out of the way to cause themselves so much unhappiness.” George Moon in *The Back of Beyond* advises Tom Saffary to take a tolerant view of his wife’s love affair with Knobby; he was dead and there was no possibility of that to recur again. Tom takes Moon’s advice to take his wife back and we are left in no doubt about the fact that their future life is going to be peaceful. In *P. & O.*, Mrs. Hamlyn comes to forgive her husband and is ready to take him back. Maugham does not hesitate to push his view to its logical conclusion. Peaceful happiness is his aim; for that he condemns people who cannot take a tolerant view; he even implies that for the sake of happiness one should have no scruple in becoming less virtuous—in this world of make-believe a little lying or concealment of so-called

sin, for the good cause of peace, does not do any harm when very likely the contrary attitude may shatter some happy life. As the narrator says in *Virtue* :

Virtue be damned. A virtue that only causes havoc and unhappiness is worth nothing.

If Margery in that story had been less virtuous and had a secret affair with Morton, it would have passed like a passing fancy and the happy household would not have been broken. But she remains virtuous and reveals to her husband the state of affairs, which results in an unbearable mental suffering for her husband who is passionately in love with her, till at last he is driven to commit suicide.¹ Maugham has made the Eternal say in *The Judgment Seat* ² :

I have often wondered why men think I attach so much importance to sexual irregularity. If they read my works more attentively they would see that I have always been sympathetic to that particular form of human frailty.

By 1930 Maugham has become quite definite in his attitude towards what is known as virtue and towards sexual infidelity. The story *Virtue* ³ was written about 1929, *The Back of Beyond* ⁴ in the same period ; so also was *The Vessel of Wrath*. ⁵ In the last-mentioned story he paints a picture of tolerance in Miss Jones who feels no scruple in her mind to marry a reformed reprobate and as such she offers a contrast to Doris of *The Force of Circumstance*, who cannot forgive her husband though he is a saint in comparison to Ginger Ted. In *Cakes and Ale* (1930) Maugham very clearly points out the greater efficacy of tolerance. Edward Driffield knows all along that his wife is deceiving him ; but he does not care ; he knows with Ashenden that Rosie is " like a clear deep pool in the forest glade into which it's heavenly to plunge, but it

¹ *Virtue*, First Person Singular.

² *Cosmopolitans*.

³ *First Person Singular*.

⁴ *Ah King*.

⁵ *Ibid*.

is neither less cool nor less crystalline because a tramp and a gypsy and a gamekeeper have plunged into it before you." He is not jealous because he is very happy with Rosie and he does not mind if other people also partake of that happiness ; that does not lessen his. He becomes almost mad with grief when Rosie leaves him.

Whether or not we agree with his unconventional conclusion about love and sexual fidelity, matters little. What matters is, that he has given a possible solution of marital troubles. At present it is of course almost an impracticable one. The wisdom of Edward Driffield is not a common one. Still we can see signs (in revolutionised Russia for example) to prove that Maugham's conclusions are not exactly insane ones. Whether they are immoral or whether there can be as much happiness as Maugham thinks is bound to be, if the world comes to take that view, is difficult to guess. But it must be pointed out that Maugham does not exactly say that one can get more happiness by following his advice than in passionate love and fidelity ; what he says is, that there are less chances of unhappiness if people can condition their minds to think like him.

He arrived at such conclusions with one thing in view, *viz.*, how to be happy, and his doctrine, in the main, resembles the doctrine " Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die." Rosie says the same thing when she advises Ashenden to take whatever pleasure comes in his way, for " we shall all be dead in a hundred years."

" I who thought I could never be in love again, of course it can't last. Why shouldn't I get what fun out of it I can ?, " says Julia in *Theatre*.

This essentially Hedonistic attitude has been exhibited over and over again by many characters in Maugham's works but there is a subtle difference between Maugham's attitude and

that of the Hedonists. The Hedonists¹ advocated the philosophy of taking whatever joy comes in one's way, but Maugham modifies it with his racial prudence. He knows that wine does not give happiness, neither can it give forgetfulness for which the Hedonists like it; it cannot give the peace of mind he is seeking. Charles in *Virtue* takes the help of wine to forget his miseries but Maugham shows that this cannot be done. Maugham does not like that momentary happiness which is followed by intense pain. That is why he condemns love, as it is understood. Love, he knows, is able to give intense happiness but there is always the risk of an unbearable pain with it. He has shown how love gives heavenly bliss to Liza, Bertha Craddock, Philip Carey, and innumerable other characters, but he has shown, in greater relief, what unbearable pain it may bring. "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all," says Tennyson; to Maugham it is mere foolishness. It is not worth the trouble of taking the risk of so much pain. He likes happiness enough and wherever he can find it, but he prefers to go without that happiness if it has much pain glued to it. In fact he is a Hedonist but a sane and discriminating Hedonist.

¹ e.g., *Aristippus and his Followers, The Cyrenaics.*

CHAPTER VIII

THE SUMMING UP

It is a far cry from *Liza of Lambeth* to *Theatre* and the author may well look back with a sigh of satisfaction. It has been said of Conrad that "he seems to have sprung just as Minerva sprang, straight from Jove's head full armed and full equipped"; this cannot be said of Maugham—in his case it has been a gradual development.

When Maugham wrote his first novel he was hailed as a rising star, but he had yet to find himself; he was not yet a master of creative art. After reading *Liza of Lambeth* Arthur Jones remarked to a friend of his that the author should become a successful dramatist¹ and the author too for a time thought that his talent was in the way of play writing. *Liza of Lambeth* is an immature production; it, however, reveals the author's keen power of observation. The next four or five novels are mere experiments, some in form as, say, *The Merry-go-round*, and some in subject matter as *The Making of a Saint*. Maugham was not yet seriously thinking of becoming a novelist; he was trying his best to be a successful dramatist. Still in some way or other these novels show his development.

At the time of writing *Liza of Lambeth* he did not know his limitations and defects. He had later the criticism of his first novel to guide him and he certainly profited by that. Maugham's second experiment, *The Making of a Saint*, deserves no more attention than a passing mention as an experiment in the historical novel. But the next two novels, *Mrs. Craddock* and *The Hero*, deserve more attention as showing distinct advance. In *Liza of Lambeth* no doubt we have a story, but it is more of a photograph of the life of the slums than a story.

¹ Mentioned in *The Summing Up*.

There is really very little of the conflict which we see in Maugham's later novels. That we get in *Mrs. Craddock* and *The Hero*. In *Mrs. Craddock* we have a theme, Bertha Craddock's passion for Edward and the disillusioned love turning her into a shrew. The same thing can be said of *The Hero*. From that point of view Maugham has made a distinct advance towards finding himself. It is nothing but vain pedagogy to try to judge between merits of a photographic realist (as Maugham in his first novel was) and that of a master in the art of story-telling (which Maugham became in his subsequent works). There is no use going into the question whether the capacity for story-telling is greater than the talent of a photographic artist or just the opposite. What is meant here by 'advance' is that Maugham, while trying to find where his particular talent lies, has found something. If he had remained a slum novelist or rather the crass realist of his early days, he might have made improvements on his photographic talents seen in *Liza of Lambeth* but his real talent lay elsewhere, where his capacity for photographic realism is an asset as a subordinate factor but not as a principal.

The two books mentioned show an advance no doubt but they fare badly indeed in comparison with Maugham's mature works; they are not written in the well-knit manner which we identify with Maugham; there is much that would have been better to leave out as unnecessary. And the same can be said of the next four novels, *The Explorer*, *The Merry-go-round*, *The Bishop's Apron* and *The Magician*. One cannot but agree with Mr. Ward, when he says that after *Mrs. Craddock* and *The Hero* "the progress of Somerset Maugham as a novelist suffers a check and does not reappear until 1915, more than a dozen years later"¹: indeed the four novels written in between are nothing but pot-boilers. *The Merry-go-round* has at least one merit that it is an experiment in form but that

¹ R. H. Ward, *W. Somerset Maugham*.

cannot' be said of the other three, specially *The Magician*. In the last-mentioned book Maugham deliberately catered to the vulgar taste for sensationalism ; he wanted money, to put it crudely, and he made it. He committed what is called by Mr. Ward " a dishonest mistake " and " a sin against inspiration." At the end of 1908 we find Maugham no better than a writer of pot-boilers.

For six years after that, Somerset Maugham disappeared as a novelist. His plays were bringing him fame and money but his real genius lay concealed. Apparently this period was barren as far as novels are concerned, but it was not so. Something was troubling him ; the memories of his past life were making him restless and, as he tells us in his autobiography, he felt that he had to put them on paper or he would have no peace of mind, and he did ; the result was a crude form of *Of Human Bondage*. This was nothing but inspiration. So long his novels were lacking that essential factor ; their faults seem so glaring because they were written uninspired ; *Of Human Bondage* is Maugham's first inspired novel. But when first this inspiration came, Maugham was unable to utilise it ; his sporadic attempts at writing novels had not made him such a master of the art as to enable him to do justice to such an inspiration. No wonder his first attempt was crude ; and he rewrote it in 1915 and has given us the monumental work *Of Human Bondage*.

Of Human Bondage was written under the spell of an inspiration and naturally it has recorded in full the working of the author's mind with its cravings and passions, as none of the books preceding it had done ; it reveals the pessimistic state of Maugham's mind which was destined to undergo many transformations with maturity. With this book really Maugham's career as a novelist begins. He finds out what he is capable of and gradually after a few experiments perfects his material and style. In *Of Human Bondage* we find him blessed with inspiration but the mechanical dexterity comes

later. His next novel, *The Moon and Sixpence*, is an experiment in form which he perfects later on. There he gives the impression of being at home; there is a certain sense of freedom of movement, fluidity which we do not see even in *Of Human Bondage*. Moreover, in this book he makes a successful experiment with time-shift and the first person singular. Two other things we notice in this book. Firstly, Maugham's fascination for simple life amid beautiful surroundings which develops into the somewhat Utopian conception of an ideal life in the short story, *The Fall of Edward Bernard*; secondly, the opening of Maugham's eyes to the possibility of the infinite beauty of soul, the first fruit of which we get in the character of Dirk Stroeve in this book and which matures later in characters like Erik Christessen and Sheppey. In this book we have the first indication that the pessimistic attitude of Maugham—his feeling about a cruel and callous Superior Force ruling man's life—has given place to an attitude of acceptance and tolerance; from now he tries to find out the means to make the best of a bad bargain.

His next novel, *The Painted Veil*, shows him a master of his art. The technical devices he has perfected and in the well-knit story we never get the impression of the chapter being disjointed episodes somehow linked together, as we get to a certain extent in *The Moon and Sixpence*. In the latter book the story interest in places slackens due to the insertion of too much of the narrator's opinions in the style of a biographer. This never happens again. Even in *The Cakes and Ale* where we get such personal comments to a perceptible extent, the fascinating style of the author prevents that from being exasperating; but in *The Moon and Sixpence* the author is not yet so fascinating; he is not yet so much at ease with this form of literary art which he has so recently taken up seriously.

Mr. R. H. Ward remarks, "The importance of *The Painted Veil*, otherwise a not very important book, lies in this

that it is the first instance of Mr. Maugham openly showing himself on the side of the angels.”¹ This is only half truth; the real importance lies in its first showing that Maugham is at last the master of his art. It no doubt shows one stage in the development of the author’s mind, viz., his fascination for the beauty of the soul, but this is only a small factor. It only affected the nature of his character drawing. The bent of a novelist’s philosophy or the peculiarity of his ideas is not the greatest consideration in judging his art. It is the impression of throbbing life that matters; and there are two things that blend together to give that impression, the people in the novel and the form or suitability of construction. In character drawing Maugham had long ago proved himself to be a master, but the other factor he had not mastered before. It was not unnatural; Aristotle noticed long ago that “beginners succeed earlier with the Diction and Characters than with the construction of a story,” and what he said of one form of literary art is applicable to novels and short stories too.

Once a master of the form and technique, Maugham never loses his mastery as all his later novels prove; they show the mastery of the greatest art, the art of concealing the artifices. Not only does he progress from the point of view of technique but from *Of Human Bondage* to *Theatre*, his latest² novel, we find his mind maturing, his views getting crystallised, his rebelling intellect gradually becoming reconciled to life which he had hitherto felt to be a hopeless muddle. And in his last novel he is so successful in detaching his mind from the sufferings of people that he can see fun in what is tragic to us. Side by side with this change of attitude towards life we find a subtle change in the world of Somerset Maugham. When he has liberated himself from the obsession,

¹ R. H. Ward, *W. Somerset Maugham*.

² Not considering *Christmas Holiday* which was published after this thesis was written.

the idea of a cruel fate ruling human life irrationally, he has time to enjoy what is good in this world. He seeks refuge in the good and the beautiful to shake off the rebellious thoughts that have only made him miserable. For a time he is attracted by a sort of materialised Utopia in Tahiti. Then he seeks something more permanent and finds that men with pure souls are the only beings that are happy. They are more sure of happiness than people living in a paradise on earth. That paradise on earth may be shattered but the real paradise in soul is beyond the reach of the miseries and sufferings of everyday life. This mature conception explains the interest he takes in the angelic characters which we find in most of the novels written between 1919 and 1933 and many of the short stories and plays of the period. He has not yet been able to look at life in a detached manner. He still feels strongly for suffering humanity and the angelic characters only give him some consolation that some people at least are happy in spite of cruel destiny or rather it is possible to be happy even on this earth. In *Theatre*, however, it seems that he has at last been able to force himself into detachment and, just as to Bergson, even tragedy appears to him comic. Naturally he, to whom the whole of life appears to be a long laugh, needs no stimulating thought of the beauty of the souls to keep his spirits up now. It is indeed rather fascinating to follow the intricate and subtle turnings of the mind of Somerset Maugham, concealed under the "skilful and unbridled art" ¹ of one of the greatest story-tellers of modern times.

Whether Maugham has yet to write his masterpiece or not, is a vain speculation, but it is certain that he is yet to reach the zenith of his reputation. His reading public is not exactly the reading public of, say, Jane Austen. "When I take up one of Jane Austen's books such as *Pride and Prejudice*," says Mark Twain, "I feel like a bar-keeper entering

¹ Anatole France, *Life and Letters*.

the kingdom of heaven.”¹ With those who seek such edifying atmosphere Maugham has no chance ; but those who want to find how complex is human character, how infinite its varieties, will find what they seek in the throbbing life depicted in Maugham’s books.

¹ Quoted in *The Fiction and the Reading Public*, by Q. D. Leavis.

APPENDIX

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE NOVELS BY WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM WITH THEIR DATES OF PUBLICATION

- Liza of Lambeth. 1897. A novel.
The Making of a Saint. 1898. A novel.
Orientations. 1899. Short stories.
The Hero. 1901. A novel.
Mrs. Craddock. 1902. A novel.
The Merry-go-round. 1904. A novel.
The Bishop's Apron. 1906. A novel.
The Explorer. 1907. A novel.
The Magician. 1908. A novel.
Of Human Bondage. 1915. A novel.
The Moon and Sixpence. 1919. A novel.
The Trembling of a Leaf. 1921. Short stories.
The Painted Veil. 1925. A novel.
The Casuarina Tree. 1926. A novel.
Ashenden, or The British Agent. 1928. Three stories.
Cakes and Ale, or The Skeleton in the Cupboard. 1930. A
novel.
First Person Singular. 1931. Short stories.
Altogether. 1931. Short stories.
The Narrow Corner. 1932. A novel.
Ah King. 1933. Short stories.
Cosmopolitans. 1936. Short stories.
Theatre. 1937. A novel.
Christmas Holiday. 1939. A novel.

